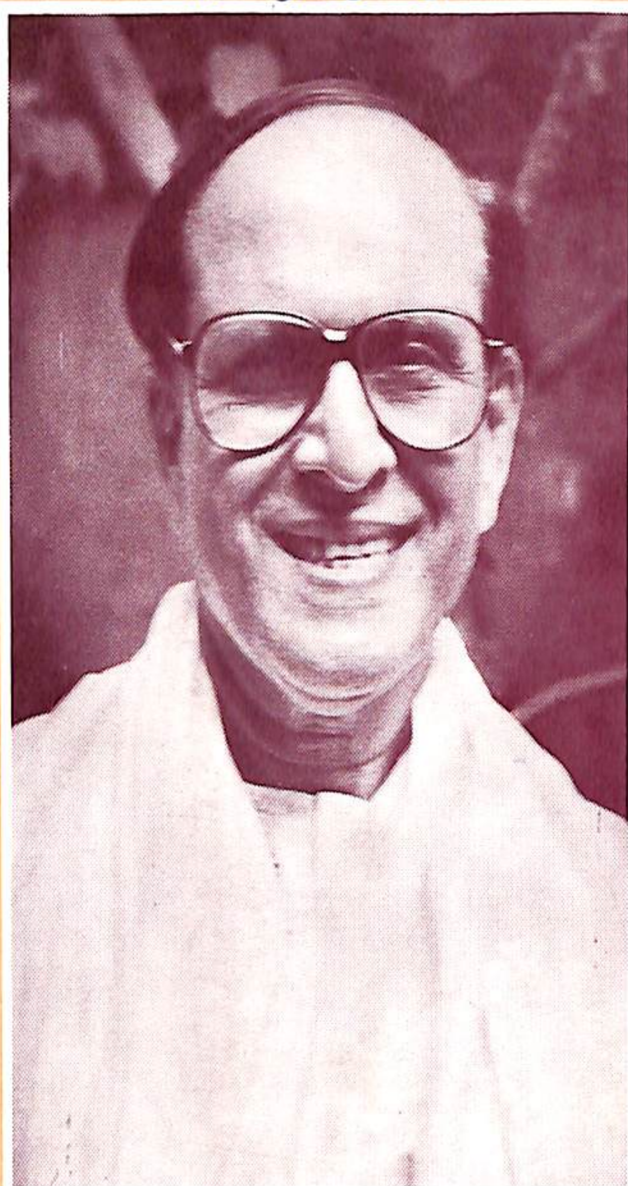
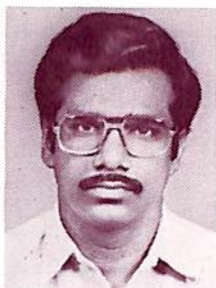


M. P. PANDIT

A PEEP INTO HIS PAST

P. RAJA



P. Raja
(b. 1952, Pondicherry)

Poet and writer of repute; recipient of the Literary Award for 1987 from Pondicherry University and Michael Madhusudan Academy Award for 1991, Calcutta.

TO

Prof. (Sri) Brijnath Kaul
who is no less a godman
on earth than was
my exalted friend —
Brahmalin
Madhav Pundalik
Pandit —
till the 14th. March, 1993.

O Saumya! May You have
constant & ecstatic
Remembrance of the SUPREME
even while living in the
present body for a
hundred years & more

Jankinath Kaul
Sept. 19, 1993.

M.P. PANDIT
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P. RAJA

DIPTI

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Dedicated
to
all admirers of
UNIVERSAL MAN



FOOTNOTE

A few years ago the thought of writing nutshell biographies of eminent literateurs of Pondicherry crossed my mind. I took the plunge and started interviewing the noteworthy pen wielders, and publishing essays on them in magazines and newspapers.

As I progressed, I aspired to write book-length biographies. I don't know what gave me the courage, but no sooner did I think so, than my choice fell on Sri M.P. Pandit. If you ask me why, I have an answer for you in my essay "Panditji as I Know Him".

In writing this book I have made much use of the Wellsian Time Machine to travel backwards and see the past years of Panditji. I am extremely grateful to all those who readily and gladly played the Time Machine for me.

Special mention must be made to Mitrabai Akka, Panditji's elder sister, for passing on to me the relevant books I needed.

My deepest appreciation to my sons—Raghu and Rajni—for their timely assistance; while the latter compiled a list of Panditji's works, the former did a clean job of typing the script.

P. RAJA

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M.P. PANDIT
A PEEP INTO HIS PAST

I

Tucked away in one corner of the busy town of Pondicherry is a unique building, or rather an institution, one of its kind in the world.

It is unique because it is the one that has given Pondicherry, the one-time fishing village, the status of a cosmopolitan city and secured it a place on the tourist map of the world.

It is unique because it stands on a place where once Sage Agastya had his Ashram.

It is unique because herein lived Sri Aurobindo, the yogis' yogi, doing tapasya and writing monumental volumes on the Life Divine.

It is unique because herein lived the Mother who propagated the integral yoga and made the Ashram a mini-township with its sprawling estate of more than 120 buildings.

It is unique because it houses the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The tall wooden doors of this unique building welcome us with their wide opened arms. We are pulled by an invisible invitation. We enter with the least notion that a feast awaits us.

The multi-coloured leaves of the crotons, flower-

bearing cactus plants of different sizes and shapes, the green foliage of shrubs grown in broad-bottomed pots and a wide variety of plants that bear admirable flowers of different sizes and hues serve as a feast for our eyes.

Our olfactory senses feast upon the invisible breeze that comes laden with the sweet scent from the flowers. Looking around we realize that cleanliness too has a smell of its own. It is here we like to inhale more air and reluctantly exhale it.

The prevalence of a mysterious silence here is music for our ears.

For a moment we blink, for we are not sure of where we are. The next moment we realize that we are in an altogether different world. Does Heaven look like this? Perhaps.

Like the Pole-star that ushered the three Magi to the birthplace of Child Jesus, the blossoms usher our way to the Samadhi that houses the human remains of the 'Uttara yogi' Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Oh, how joyfully our optic nerves respond to the sight of the Samadhi decorated with a fine assortment of flowers, rearranged in a different pattern every half an hour.

The burning joss sticks vie with the flowers to emanate their scent while disciples, admirers and tourists kneel down by the sides of the Samadhi and touch it with their foreheads, thereby paying homage to the Divines. A few stand by the sides of the Samadhi and lift their hands heavenwards. A few squat under the shade of the 100 year old Service tree that stands

sentinel and guards the Samadhi from shine or rain. They all invariably meditate upon the Divine and pray:

> I am Thine, Lord, without any restriction or preference; may Thy will be done in all its rigorous plenitude; all my being adheres to it with a joyous acceptance and a calm serenity.
>
> I have no longer any idea about the future; it is Thou who wilt awaken the new conception more closely answering Thy law.
>
> In a most perfect surrender and a most entire trust I wait: Thy voice showing me Thy path.

(Mother: *Prayers & Meditations*, p. 246)

We too stand in silence, pray to the Divine beings and pay homage to the two great souls.

What next?

We ask ourselves and look around. Our eyes do not fail to notice people walk past us towards the Eastern direction and turn to their left.

Curiosity ebbing in our hearts, we too follow suit.

The place is crowded. We see men and women craning their necks to have a glimpse of something or somebody. Decency forbids us to elbow our way into the crowd and so we too crane our necks.

What do we see?

A showroom thickly populated by books on diverse but related subjects—Veda, Upanishads, Gita, Tantra, philosophy, psychology, occultism and the integral yoga. They are all authored by one who wields an auriferous pen and has a lucid and limpid style. The

author himself is seated at one end of the room not big enough to swing a cat. He is not merely a scholar and writer, but a Siddha—realized person.

It is no wonder people crowd before the showroom which also happens to be the Siddha's office to have a glimpse of the living philosopher and yogi—M.P. PANDIT.

Writer, Philosopher, Yogi and a Siddha-Purusha. What else is he?

A lover of human beings. In spite of his tight schedule he spares enough time to his visitors who very reluctantly move out of his office envying the other visitors eagerly awaiting their turn to have a 'darshan' of him and get blessed.

We too spend a few anxious minutes to meet the great soul in flesh and blood.

Now it is our turn.

Our eyes meet him and get rivetted to his 75 year old face glowing with spiritual knowledge and wisdom which speaks volumes to us.

He beams at us with a divine smile, a smile that would very easily disarm a Nathuram Godse or even a more cruel human bomb.

Our palms spontaneously join together paying obeisance to him. Our knees bend and touch the well-polished floor. Our forehead as if pulled by some magnetic force moves towards his lotus feet and touches them.

Does he accept 'Pranams' from people?

Yes, he does.

He does because he is, to put it in his own words, "an heir to a tradition that inculcates respect for elders. It is an important part of the discipline in any cultural Indian household to train the children to respect and express their reverence to the elders in the family—and society—in appropriate ways. One of them is to offer *namaskar*, bowing down, to the elders... I have been accustomed to offering obeisance to elders ever since childhood. The trait is ingrained in my character. And when people who come to express their respect in this manner, I take it in this normal spirit. That does not make me their guru or their god. It is part of the culture in which I have grown up to respect people's sentiments and friendliness. When I meet persons who are senior to me—in any of the lines of development or status in society e.g. head of a muth, Guru adored by many, I spontaneously prostrate myself in pranam. Even in the society in which I am placed, I always offer pranam to my seniors on special days—birthdays, etc, mine or theirs—and there is nothing unusual in it" (*Service Letter*, No: 239, p.1).

Who is an elder? This question instinctively emerges from the recesses of our mind. According to our Indian custom there are three types of elders: *vayo-vriddha*, elder by age; *jnāna-vriddha*, senior by knowledge; *tapo-vriddha*, older by askesis, consecration to God.

Panditji, as he is affectionately called by his admirers and friends, would easily fit into all these three slots. Perhaps this is the reason for the magnetic pull of our forehead towards his lotus-feet.

Seconds pass.

Our head feels the touch of his hand.

A great light floods our whole being and we are no longer conscious of anything but him. It is a strange experience that would dodge the pen of even the writers famed for portraying minute details. We feel blessed.

A couple of Jasmine buds he gives to us, symbolic of the blossoms we are yet to see in our lives.

We hasten to ask him a question that continues to remain a poser to us: *How can we get rid of the present world-wide violence?*

"By creating centres of peace, pockets of peace, wherever we can. First we start with ourselves and then associate with others who are on the same wave-length. This is a sure way of combating the forces of violence on the subtle levels."

His answer is short. But that sets the clock ticking. We are prompted to ask him yet another question: *How are we to live in a world full of violence, greed, envy and brutality? Will we not be destroyed?*

"By eliminating these negative elements from our personal life, we can create a solid, living fortress, around ourselves. Impurities shy away from Purity. Even if an individual is destroyed by a combination of evil forces, in the very act of dying he releases energies that will eventually overcome the power of evil for the benefit of mankind," he answers and awaits our next question.

But we run short of questions for his answers have

already set the ball rolling. Our mind is awakened.

We move out of his room. His message, "Life has a purpose and to find it is the first concern of the awakened mind", continues to linger in our mind.

It is universally agreed that only great souls are capable of awakening the mind of lesser mortals. It goes without saying that we belong to the second category. And we don't doubt his integrity as a great soul.

Madhav Pundalik Pandit was born like you and me. But how did he evolve into a great soul much honoured and respected by people from many walks of life? What is it that pulls a crowd to seek his blessing?

A peep into his past will help us to find an answer to our questions.

II

June 14, 1918.

An affluent house in Sirsi was celebrating the arrival of a new born babe destined to grow up in its folds.

The occupants of the house were Hindus to the core. Highly religious by nature they offered their daily prayers to God in the pooja room at home and austerely performed poojas in temples. In short, God was their way of life.

They belonged to the community of Gowd Saraswats, whose original home was in Kashmir on the banks of the now extinct river Saraswati. Like any

other community, Gowd Saraswats too migrated to many other parts of India for various obvious reasons.

Sirsi is one among the small towns in the North Kanara district of Karnataka state that threw open its gates wide, welcomed them and happily saw these Konkani speaking men and women settle down.

Rao Bahadur Pundalikrao Pandit, a leading advocate of his times who magnanimously gave away much of his time and money for social work and education stood at the threshold of his affluent house. He was giving a hearty welcome to his guests who have come to join in the celebration.

The mind is no doubt a well-oiled Time Machine, shuttling back and forth. Rao Bahadur's Time Machine raced several miles backwards, took him down his memory lane and came to a halt with a screeching noise.

It was the time when he was thoroughly upset about the untimely demise of his beloved wife. Words are poor comforters when the heart knows its own sorrows.

It was the time when his deep grief had driven him to his life's edge. He was not mature enough to digest grief.

It was the time when he decided to take to Sannyas. It is true that great grief makes sacred those upon whom its hand is laid.

Wasting little time he hurried to the shrine of Dattatreya, his family deity, at Ganagapur.

He squatted on the floor of the temple, closed his eyes, cupped his palms and began to pray. All that he

prayed for was only the blessing of the Lord and permission to go ahead with his chosen new path.

Lord Dattatreya blessed him, but not in the way Rao Bahadur had wanted it. Mortals can only request, but it is the gods who decide for them.

While still in prayer, Rao Bahadur went into a trance. His cupped hands were full—full with four ripe mangoes. His heart jumped for joy. He opened his eyes only to realise that it was only a dream.

But dreams can foretell. They can provide information about the dreamer's problems and conflicts. They sometimes solve the problems of the dreamers. Rao Bahadur wasn't unaware of it. Hence he sought the help of an able interpreter of dreams.

"Four ripe mangoes, eh?... Four Sons, as useful as ripe mangoes, are to be born of your loins," said the interpreter of dreams.

"Will you further explicate?" asked the curious Rao Bahadur.

"Simple... Quite simple," responded the interpreter of dreams. "Don't ripe mangoes satisfy our hunger? The four sons to be born will quench man's thirst for knowledge."

Rao Bahadur thought awhile. He murmured: "Aren't we mere puppets in the hands of God? If God wills it, so let it be."

The best way to quell sorrow is to think of happier things. The thought of taking to Sannyas began to roll away from his mind like a story that is told.

A few weeks later pushed by an inner urge he moved

to Goa, where he met a twelve year old beauty at her parent's house. It was love at first sight. And it was no one-sided love. He was bold enough to meet her parents and unhesitatingly opened his mind to them.

The beauty's parents happily married her off to the convention-breaking bridegroom.

Laxmibai became Mrs. Pundalikrao Pandit. She was a very devoted wife and never poked her nose in the professional or social activities of her husband. She never grumbled about his charitable deeds. The husband on his part made her happy in all possible ways and both of them lived happily together.

The birth of six children—three boys and three girls—serve ample testimony to the fact that the couple really loved each other. And now it was the seventh. The dream had come true.

"What are you doing here?" asked an elderly lady pulling Rao Bahadur by his sleeve. "Now is the auspicious time for naming the child".

He pulled himself to the present. Smiling at his past, he walked towards the cradle to name the future man.

In the cradle lay a fair-complexioned cherub trying to suck from his own thumb.

Rao Bahadur smiled at his six children who stood surrounding the cradle. He then placed a rupee coin near the new-born on the mattress, lifted the hefty child and planted a kiss on his chubby cheek and called him: NEELAKANTHA.

The Children ran around the cradle, clapped their hands in a playful mood all the time shouting the name

of the child. The guests for their turn placed their presents in the cradle and uttered the name of the child in a voice that was sweet.

But one among the Rao Bahadur's children pulled a long face at the mention of the name. It was distinctly clear that he didn't approve of that name. He was Sundararao, the second son.

Minutes later, when the guest began to trickle out, Sundararao cooed endearments to the child, brushed his velvet soft hair with his fingers and called him: MADHAV.

Everyone in the house including the Rao Bahadur liked the name. The name Neelakantha disappeared as quickly as it had appeared. The name Madhav stuck.

Madhav was a many splendoured child in the eyes of his mother, and a blessing of joy and happiness to his father.

III

Psychologists are of the opinion that the most important thing for any child is a feeling of security during the difficult business of growing up. The child can acquire this only when he knows that he is loved by his parents, not just by fits and starts but continuously.

Madhav had the feeling of security in abundance. There was always someone to smile at him. There was always someone to hug him and plant an affectionate kiss on his hairy head, or his chubby cheeks. There was

either of his parents to pay attention to him. Everyone in the household made life amusing and gay to the child.

Psychologists opine that a child can have much gayer and more light-hearted time if there is another younger or older child in the household. Madhav had three brothers and three sisters who lavished their time and love on him.

Madhav grew up amidst plenty of love. Since he experienced the true nature of love, he breathed love, spoke love, and emitted love.

Madhav's expanding mind has been engaged in learning about himself, the people around him, and his relationships to them. He has learned acceptable ways of expressing and controlling his feelings and desires. He never spoke unless he had something cogent to say. Silent he was not, prudent he was. Mischievous he was not; playful he was.

Born in the family of the religious minded, Madhav had religion and spirituality in his blood. Woken up early, young Madhav was bathed and dressed by his mother before he was taken to the temple.

Once inside the temple, his mind thought only about God, and in the presence of the Lord at the sanctum sanctorum, his eyes stood glued to the idol and he became insensitive to the surroudings. Perhaps that was the way he taught himself the preliminary steps to meditation.

Time came for Madhav to be admitted in a school where the symbols which we use to express ideas,

things and places—such as numbers, words, letters, sentences, pictures, and maps—will engage his interest and become fascinating tools through which his world expands.

Rao Bahadur Pundalik Rao had great plans for the future of his son Madhav. He wanted him to become a lawyer following the family tradition. Hence he not only admitted him in the best of schools, but also employed a few reputed teachers to coach him privately.

Thus the child's leisure hours were shared by four different masters who taught him English, Sanskrit, Mathematics, and Science respectively.

While three teachers went to Rao Bahadur's house at different times to coach the boy, the fourth was so old that he couldn't move out of his house. Since Rao Bahadur had a lot of faith in him as able teacher, he decided to send Madhav to the old master's house.

Madhav, by now, was accustomed to getting up very early in the morning on his own accord. Dressed in half-pants, shirt, coat and a cap the boy left his house at 6.30 a.m. everyday to have his tuition at the master's house.

The boy had to pass by the market street in order to reach the master's house. It was customary of the traders to open their establishments at that early hour, and they invariably saw the neatly dressed boy go with his satchel over his shoulder everyday.

"Whose son is this boy? I see him go to school so early everyday!" asked one grocer another.

"I'm papa's son," pat came the reply from Madhav.

The answer was unexpected. The traders broke into a guffaw.

Madhav blinked.

"Aren't you your mama's son?" asked another grocer giggling.

"I'm papa's son," Madhav said and went on his way. He heard someone telling the traders: "He is the youngest son of Pundalikrao."

The answer that came from young Madhav, though roused a laugh amidst traders, was definitely from the depth of his heart. He was proud of his father; his mother was only secondary to him. To him his father was God, an immortal. It was not out of fear he worshipped his father, for the latter never used a rod on or showed a harsh face to any of his children; but it was out of sheer love.

His father was his first guru.

"A guru," to put it in the words of M.P. Pandit, "is one who does not impose himself on you, who does not make demands on you, who does not create problems for you, who solves your problem silently, who functions by his example, not so much by his teachings as by his behaviour, standards. Such is the Guru" (*Art of Living*, p. 76).

Apart from love, what did his first guru teach him?

It is quite often told to parents: "Catch them young. Teach them young." Rao Bahadur taught Madhav the value of money.

It is very rare to come across a child who likes to save

rather than spend, especially when a vendor of sweets is nearby. Madhav, being born with a silver spoon in his mouth, used to receive a four anna coin whenever there was a fair.

Four annas was a huge amount in those days when a gram of gold was sold for less than a rupee. Unbelievable. But true. One can buy a sackload of sweets with four annas and eat it for days together.

Once Rao Bahadur placed a four anna coin in the wee-palm of Madhav and said: "It is for you. You are at liberty to buy whatever you want. But if you save and keep it with me, I'll give you interest. It will double itself by this time next year. That means you'll have eight annas, plus the usual four annas... What do you say?"

The boy had no second thoughts. He wanted to be rich by 12 annas. He gave the coin back to his father with a smile. He had understood the force, the power of money.

If you store money, you are branded a miser. And if you spend it you are called a spendthrift. This is the way of the world.

Several years later, Madhav had put the same idea in the form of a question to the Mother in Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

> "She told me something which has always stuck in my mind. It is a paradox. She said you should be both. You should welcome money, conserve it with attention to the last pie; it is an occult law that where

money is treasured, where money is respected, there it flows. Money flows where it is welcomed, where it is cherished, where it is worshipped. That is why money in the West has always flowed to the Jewish community. And once it starts coming, it forms a habit of pouring there. So you conserve, you have to be a careful accountant when you get and keep the money. But she said, when you spend you have to be liberal, be generous; do not calculate when you spend. Choose a good cause, spend, but do not waste. Whether it is coins, currency notes or food or clothes do not waste but spend wisely; Nature always rushes things where they are properly used" (*Art of Living*, pp. 160–161).

Madhav's four anna coin began to grow. It grew to be thirteen rupees. It was deposited in a bank to grow further.

IV

Examination system, six decades before, was not as it is today. Examinations conducted today merely tend to test the memory power of students. Whoever mugs up his lessons well and reproduce them on paper in the examination halls is bound to get the highest percentage of marks. But the older system provided the students with enough opportunity to think. While dozens of books are but gargled in the mouth by the

students of today, a few books were well studied and thoroughly digested by students a couple of generations ago.

Madhav worked hard at his studies. He studied to get a thorough insight into his subjects. His love for reading didn't stop with his text-books. When he had done his homework, he made it a discipline to pick up the story books in Kannada for light reading. He was sure that nothing could be achieved in this world without discipline. When books were not available at home he borrowed them from the nearby temple library.

The more he studied the more he discovered his ignorance. He had not yet reached his teens, when doubts began to cross his mind. Are we real? Or are we just like the characters that make their entries and exits in the fiction we read? Will dreams come true? Is life itself a dream? Such questions he asked himself again and again. He didn't ask others for fear of being laughed at. To the elders such questions would sound funny, even silly. But Madhav wasn't aware that the elders too were as ignorant as he was.

The questions continued to haunt his mind. He had his awakening--his first awakening.

From that day, his prayer was akin to that of the Mother's:

> "Lord, incomprehensible reality, Thou who ever fleest before our conquest, effective though it may be, Thou who shalt always be the unknown despite

all that we shall learn to know of Thee, despite all that we shall ravish from Thy eternal mystery, we would go forward, making a complete and constant effort, combining all the multiple paths leading to Thee, go forward like a rising, indomitable tide, breaking down all obstacles, crossing every barrier, lifting up every veil, scattering all clouds, piercing through all darkness, go forward towards Thee, ever to Thee, in a movement so powerful, so irresistible that a whole multitude may be drawn in our wake, and the earth, conscious of Thy new and eternal Presence, understand at last its true purpose, and live in the harmony and peace of Thy sovereign realisation.

Teach us always more,
Give us more light,
Dispel our ignorance,
Illumine our minds,
Transfigure our hearts,

And give us the Love that never runs dry, and makes Thy sweet law flower in every being.

We are Thine for all Eternity."

(*Prayers and Meditations*, p. 54)

Books gave Madhav knowledge. Examinations, in spite of the knowledge he had acquired through study, gave him the jitters. He was not as bold as Dr. Samuel Johnson to proclaim, "Examinations are for fools. I don't want to be one among them". He had to face

them. He did by having a lot of faith in Ganapati, the elephant-headed and pot-bellied God with a mouse as his mount.

Sandwiched between board and glass, the picture of Lord Ganapati well framed had its pride of place in the study room of Madhav. He sought His blessings everyday. Blessing at that age was meant to get through the examinations. And when fear of examinations rocked him, he wrote letters to the Lord with a request to pass him and slipped such small chits into the opening he had made at the back of the picture. He was sure of getting through in flying colours. Such was his faith.

While the son had faith in Ganapati, a God, the father, Pundalikrao, started having faith in Ganapati Muni, a man.

Sri Vasishtha Ganapati Muni, affectionately called 'Nayana', was popularly known in the literary circle as 'Kavyakantha'. A celebrated Sanskrit poet, scholar, Sri Vidya *upasaka*, *ashtavadhani*, astrologer, Mantra Siddha, and the foremost disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, he was engaged in secret revolutionary activity to win freedom for Mother India through "yogic and spiritual means". He strongly believed that it was possible to bring about a revolution in the country by assembling spiritual power through tapasya. He was not only an adept in spiritual matters, but also an expert in thè Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda.

On his way to Gokarn, a holy place fifty miles from Sirsi, Sri Ganapati Muni sojourned in the house of Mr.

Vishwamitra, a colleague and good friend of Sundar-rao.

Sundarrao—an admirer of saints and sages, poets and patriots--developed an acquaintance with Sri Ganapati Muni and sought his help to cure his father—Pundalikrao—ailing from rheumatic trouble.

The Muni came home, examined Pundalikrao and prescribed herbal oils to be rubbed on the affected parts of the body.

Thanks to the miraculous powers of Ayurveda. Relieved of his sickness, Pudalikrao started having faith in the Muni.

"To those who help, all help is given," says a Tamil proverb. When Rao Bahadur learnt that the Muni was in need of a place to do his *tapasya* undisturbed, he very gladly and willingly offered his bungalow called 'Anandashram' situated a mile away from Sirsi.

The Muni moved there and began his rigorous *tapasya.*

Sri Vaṣishtha Ganapati Muni was the first spiritual contact Madhav had in his life. He was only twelve at that time.

It was during the Muni's stay at 'Anandashram', Sri Kapali Sastry visited Sirsi to meet his guru.

Sundarrao who deemed it a privilege to invite spiritual men home to bless his family, jumped at the opportunity.

Sri Kapali Sastri visited the home of Rao Bahadur and met all the members of the family. Contact

developed. Soon he became "Anna" (elder brother) to the family.

"The authentic tradition," writes M.P. Pandit, "is that you do not have to search for a Guru. When you are ready, the Guru comes to you. And when he appears before you, you know he is the Guru. The whole being rises in adoration. It melts into him and takes you up like a child" (*Art of Living*, pp. 78–79).

Madhav was ready. His guru had come in the form of Sri Kapali Sastry. The mentor was destined to play a very major role in the life of his disciple.

Sri T.V. Kapali Sastry hailed from a family steeped in Vedic knowledge and practice. Born on September 3, 1886 at Mylapore (Madras), he was named after the presiding deity of the place, Kabaleeshwarar. He had his early education at home in Sankrit under the able guidance of his father, Sri Vishweshwara Sastry who was a Sanskrit scholar in Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, and an ardent Sri Vidya Upasaka. By the time he was twelve he had acquired a good grounding in the Veda, the epics and literature.

After attaining an assured but quiet stature and standing in the world of scholars and spiritual seekers at a very young age, Sri Kapali Sastry went to render his service as a Sanskrit teacher to the interested students of Muthialpet High school, Madras.

When he was twenty, he came under the influence of Sri Vashishta Ganapati Muni, and in course of time became his eminent disciple and heir to the sage's vast learning and poetic genius.

To have a clear picture of his genius one can do no better than quote from the introductory remarks made by Sri M.P. Pandit who paid homage to his master by editing a commemoration volume on the occasion of the birth centenary of Sri Kapali Sastry (Sept.3, 1986):

"Sastriar was a multiple personality. He excelled in whatever field he worked. Among his several services to the national heritage, the one which comes most prominently to the mind is his solid contribution in building a strong bridge between the ancient past and the evolutionary thought of the present. Following the trail of his masters, first of Vasishtha Ganapati Muni and then of Sri Aurobindo, he unearthed many a truth that lies concealed within the cryptic utterances of the Veda. His was not a scholastic approach, though he was an impregnable scholar in his own right. He delved into this hymnal on the strength of his inner experience, verified the verities that are perceivable to the awakened eye, in his own yogic realisations and then went on, in his sixtieth year, to write his classic commentary on the first Ashtaka of the Rig Veda in virile Sanskrit... Sastriar's forte is simple yet powerful diction in handling the Sanskrit language. He wrote in four languages, true, English, Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit; but the last, the tongue of the Gods, was most natural to him. For he lisped his first alphabet in Sanskrit when he was an infant and had completed his first traditional reading of the Ramayana by the

time he was seven. In his exhaustive commentary on the hymns of the Veda, he traces an often missed continuity in the thought and experience of the Indian mind and soul from the Vedic beginnings to the present day, through the Upanishads, the Tantras, the Epics, the Puranas. He explains the legends in the Puranas with reference to the seed-truths enshrined in the older texts and not vice versa.

"His writings on the Upanishads, especially on the various Vidyas, disciplines, that are inadequately described in verbal terms in the originals, are a treasure of mystic lore. His *Lights on the Upanishads*, are manuals of sadhana and present in detail such lines of *Upasana*, intensive effort, as the interiorisation of consciousness, plunging into the heart-cave, expansion of being so as to merge in the manifestation of the universal Life-force ascension beyond the mind into the altitudes of the spirit, and—more important—the way to discover and taste the Delight of existence that underlies all creation. Indeed, he leaves certain details unsaid in the sacred tradition of the Guru-Shishya communication, but what he has expounded is a veritable mind of instruction, guidance and inspiration.

"Sastriar regarded himself as a tantric, first and last. For ever since his childhood he was brought up in an environment of *Sri Vidya*, the purest form of worship of the Divine Mother, alongside his family obligations to the Vedic heritage. He regards and proves that these two traditions, the Veda and the Tantra,

have a common origin and have developed on parallel lines, complementary in fact. He explains the rationale of the different schools of Tantra in terms that are satisfying to the modern intellect. He de-mystifies what has been commonly regarded as mysterious.

"And then comes what was most intimate to him, yoga. After practising some of the main lines of discipline in the esoteric wisdom of the Vedic and Tantric insipiration, he was led, early in his career, to the feet of Sri Ramana Maharshi who, at that time, was still living in the hill caves of Arunachala. Sastriar developed his inner life in the mould of the Sage's Path of Quest for the Self—an austere, psychological discipline—and arrived at certain radical realisations before he found himself literally transported into the mighty Presence of Sri Aurobindo... he spent over 25 years of the rest of his life in the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother devoting himself to the thought and practice of Integral Yoga. He wrote widely in exposition of the finer and intricate aspects of the Poorna Yoga perfected by the Masters. He translated into Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu some of the key works in this Teaching. He was a poet whose abilities were appreciated by Sri Aurobindo—himself the Poet of the Age—especially in his rendering of the first canto of *Savitri*, admittedly the most difficult in the epic.

"He followed several ways of spiritual quest in the course of his concentrated life and drew the utmost

from each before he proceeded to synthesise all in the depths of his soul. Though the Path of Knowledge, Jnana Marga, was his natural line, especially in his earlier years, his emotional being was always athrob behind the seemingly stern exterior. He was a standing exemplar of the synthetic note of the Gita in as much as he was at once a mature Jnanin, a pure Bhakta and a perfectionist in works. He had a wide grasp of the nature and problems of the human being and he went all his way to help whenever anyone sought it. One could say he was a spiritual pragmatist in the finest sense.

"Sastriar was a profound votary and a masterful adept in the Mantra Sastra. It is on record how his Mantra Japa turned the tide in the lives of many in distress. The Mother confirmed that when he recited an invocation during his meditations, the very Deities were present almost physically and the effect of their response was materially perceptible.

"And more, Kapali Sastriar had a profound knowledge of the sciences of astrology, Rasa Sastra, Ayurveda. He used to be consulted by practioners in these fields and he was very liberal in his communication. His knowledge of the occult side of life was as deep as the spiritual. He was no seeker for his solitary salvation. He spread himself out in different dimensions and acted upon situations that called for merciful interventions. It is not generally known that he was a patriot involved in secret revolutionary activity for winning freedom for his motherland in

the first decades of the present century under the leadership of another Master-Spirit that was Vasishtha Ganapati Muni..." (*Versatile Genius*, pp.vii-ix).

During his evening strolls, Madhav entered 'Anand-ashram' everyday and offered his namaskars without fail to 'Nayana' and 'Anna'. They in turn blessed him.

Nayana who had been observing Madhav for several days, told his chief lieutenant thus: "Kapali! I see a light around Madhav, that little boy. He should be taken care of and guided properly."

Kapali Sastry nodded his head as if to say he was right. For a second he perhaps ruminated over the lines of Sri Aurobindo:

> "A light not born of sun or moon nor fire,
> A light that dwelt within and saw within
> shedding an intimate visibility,
> Made secrecy more revealing than the word:
> Our sight and sense are a fallible gaze and touch
> And only the spirit's vision is wholly true."
>
> (*Savitri*, Book VII, canto 5, lines: 109–114)

Madhav was not aware of Nayana's command to Kapali then, for he was only thirteen.

Madhav passed his sixth standard. He had to leave Sirsi Marikamba School for St. Paul's School, Belgaum to qualify for his matriculation examination. He was fourteen.

V

1932.

Madhav joined the family of his eldest brother, Raghavendrarao who was Assistant commissioner in Belgaum.

He found himself a stranger to the Christian prayers, discipline, timings and methods of teaching in the school. Sanskrit was not taught and the medium of instruction was English. To cap them all there were no games.

Tuition masters were engaged to coach the boy. He passed his matriculation examination. His school career came to an end.

To pursue his higher education, Madhav was sent to Karnatak College, Dharwar.

Back in Sirsi during one of his short vacations, Madhav rambled into his brother sundarrao's office. Having nothing else to do on that sultry afternoon he began reading the titles of the bound volumes of law reports neatly shelved. His eyes stood on a green bound volume titled *Alipore Bomb Trial.*

What was the book about? He didn't know. Yet something pushed him to pull it out from the shelf and open it.

He opened it only to find a photograph. Beneath it was written the name of Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose...Sri Aurobindo Ghose...Sri Aurobindo Ghose...Sri Aurobindo Ghose...Sri Aurobindo Ghose... The name became a mantra to him. He

recited the name again and again, even though he had the least idea about Sri Aurobindo.

He felt that he was completely under a spell. It was a strange experience.

Hours later he told his mother about the photograph and the strange experience he had. She passed the news on to her son, Sundarrao who in turn wrote to Kapali Sastry in Pondicherry.

Kapali Sastry was quite happy to hear about Madhav's finding the photograph of Sri Aurobindo.

A month later, Madhav received a letter. It was from Kapali Sastry. Though it was not the first letter from him Madhav gave a special place to this letter. Perhaps this is the reason why this letter finds a prominent place in his book *Mother and I.* The letter read:

"I learnt that you found the photo of a great soul, a very, very great person—in whom I found God—on the 15th of August, his birthday. How did you happen to get it? Don't you think that there is some secret in it? You can know more of it as you grow. You have my best wishes. May God bless you!" 21.9.1934 (P: 1).

Correspondence between the master and his disciple developed. Every letter from Kapali Sastry brought Madhav joy or spiritual growth.

Madhav began reading the *Gospel* of Sri Ramakrishna and the works of Swami Vivekananda.

Sundarrao who happened to see his brother read such spiritual books was quite happy at heart. He was happy because teen-agers usually go in for pulp or romantic novels. His brother was different from others.

Yet he felt that it was his duty to caution him.

"Concentrate all your attention on your text books. Once you finish your course and get your degree, you will find a lot of time to read books of your choice," he said.

Madhav smiled and didn't say a word against his brother. He said to himself: "Textbooks, diplomas and degrees are not in anyway going to help me get *moksha*. Only spiritual literature can do it".

To Madhav, *Moksha* "does not mean salvation from the world, giving up the world and fleeing from it. *Moksha* is liberation from Nature, liberation from falsehood, ignorance, incapacity. Man has to free himself in order to perfect himself. He endeavours to rise above ignorance, above limiting knowledge, above falsehood and ascend into Truth, Knowledge, Power. This liberation from the bonds of Nature is *Moksha*" (*The Indian Spirit*, p. 7).

He began to crave for the day when he would read more of such books and would have the satisfaction that he had done something worthwhile.

He began to feel that his prayers to the deities were gradually undergoing a change. He no more prayed for getting through his examinations. That stage in his life was gone. His prayers were now meant for the good health of his parents and brothers and sisters.

No one on Earth prays to Yama, Lord of Death. It is rare to come across a temple built to honour Him. And it is no wonder that Death is angry with everyone of us.

Death so managed it that even before the Gods could

listen to the prayers of Madhav, it snatched away Raghavendrarao, the one time Assistant Commissioner and now the collector of Belgaum. He was only 38. Four months later Rao Bahadur Pundalikrao too went to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.

The two deaths in the family that took place in the same year failed to send a shiver down the spine of Madhav. The spiritual books that he had read and digested have taught him what Death is. He writes:

> "What happens after death is largely determined by what has happened in the life of the individual before death, i.e., during his life-time. The physical body is shed but the consciousness that lived in the body continues. It carries the movements which impelled it during its embodiment on the physical plane and hence its career after death is also governed by the same impulsions. The *Samskaras* that were cultivated during the life in the body continue even after the body is dropped. No last minute tricks or subterfuges of repeating the name of god etc.,can really alter this fact" (*All Life is Yoga,* First Series, p.47).

An intensive reading of the spiritual literature pushed Madhav to develop an inclination to shun life and take to sannyas. But it was Kapali Sastry who curbed his youthful enthusiasm to run away from the realities of life. His good counsel made Madhav write at a later date thus:

"Pretty early in my career it was impressed upon me that life--human life—is a precious opportunity for realising the truth of existence, of oneself and of the universe. Life is not meant to be somehow lived. It is to be geared to one central purpose if one is to achieve anything at all. Personally, with the acceptance of a spiritual ideal, life for me had to turn to a new direction, find an altogether new dimension. Thus the smallest activity of any kind took on a special character. Each movement became a feeder to the heart's aspiration for a god-life. Nothing could be excluded from the purview" (*What Life Has Taught Me*, p. 5).

By his affectionate letters, he inspired Madhav to take part in extra-curricular activities such as lecturing and debating. Madhav's participation in an elocution competition held at Bombay won him a cup. He was also elected Secretary of the Debating Society. He was proficient in carroms, played badminton and evinced a lot of interest in tennis.

The first year of the degree course in the Karnatak college was not yet over. Madhav had already started reading the works of Sri Aurobindo.

Finding his way through Sri Aurobindo's *Lights on Yoga* published by Arya publishing House, Calcutta, he hit upon an advertisement which said that those interested in the photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother could get them on request.

Madhav dropped a postcard to The Arya Publishing

House. His wish was fulfilled. He faithfully framed and kept them along with the photograph of Ramana Maharshi in his study.

The reading of Sri Aurobindo's works and the presence of the yogis' photographs brought in him a change. He moved to a new direction. He began to realise that an aimless life is a useless life. He muttered, "Life has a meaning, our birth has a meaning: that meaning is to realise in ourselves, in each one of us, something of God, to express in our daily life something that is associated with God, knowledge, kindness, benevolence, purity and happiness".

It took little time for him to realise that it was a sheer waste of time to pursue his studies in the college. "If my aim is to realise the divinity of my soul and liberate myself from the blinding ignorance of nature it is to be realised here and now, not elsewhere after death. The perception of this truth allows no respite. Life is a continuous exertion in the spirit of Sri Aurobindo's golden rule:. Aspire with an intensity that would reach the goal the next moment but with a patience and persistence that would wait for a whole eternity" (*What Life Has Taught Me*, pp. 5–6). He wanted to bid good-bye to the Institution of Higher Learning and go to Pondicherry to join the Ashram once for all. Both his mind and body were very willing.

But Kapali Sastry advised him not to let his mind wander till he finished his studies. He wrote to his Madhav in a letter dated 24.10.1934:

"... in your last letter you ask me to take you to the Mother. I do not understand you correctly; in this letter also you say that I must convey to the Mother your prayer etc. That is what you seem to say in effect. I am afraid that I have again to remind you of what I have more than once told you—that you are still young a student in his teens etc. When the time comes, there will be no difficulty whatever (in your case) to get the necessary permission and have her direct personal touch. What more assurance do you need?

"My dear Madhav, I hope you will be quite glad to receive this suggestion from me and also the assurance— that it will be quite improper and uncalled, for at the present for me to speak to the Mother about you, and that it will be quite proper to do so when the time comes, when you are ready and require my service. Meanwhile I am hopeful that the Spark in you will steadily be growing into a flame of aspiration for God—and you will not at all be a loser in anyway. You will gain by grasping the spirit of what I say" (*Mother and I*, p. 7).

Thus Kapali Sastry had put his disciple on the right track. How true are the words of Gandhiji: "I have always felt that the true text book for the pupil is his teacher".

VI

"Madhav must grow to be ready for all the strength and fitness for which he aspires." It was the wish of Sri Kapali Sastry. He knew that it was only a question of time.

But Madhav still in his teens had his own fear of a fall from the right path. He told his master that he didn't want to marry.

"Who ever compels you to marry, my dear Madhav?" asked Sastry and advised him: "You are and will be free to choose a life without wife... First allow yourself to grow in strength and wisdom. Decisions can be taken when the need or problem arises, when the time comes, when you are fully grown up".

Madhav grew up to treat the thoughts of the fear of a fall from the right path as passing clouds, called Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from the depths of his heart in times of need.

Apart from his study of History and Economics for his B.A. degree, Madhav was blossoming well as a gifted orator. The letters from his master were not only providing him with points for his lectures but also giving proper guidance for the right way of delivering the gathered goods.

The three golden rules that Kapali Sastry gave at various times to Madhav would be of immense help to all budding orators:

1. You must study the question independently, collect the facts, weigh the pros and cons, and come to

a conclusion, and not allow yourself to be lost in the common crowd of confused ideas, echoing the voice of a social service lecturer or of a college Don.

2. You must learn the lesson—shall not provoke jealousy, cultivate winning manners and so on—it is easy to say but difficult to do because even trained grown up men cannot easily address a hostile audience. Granting that you deserved not a prize on the particular occasion, can it not be that such failures are 'bricks in the edifice of success'?

3. Do not fancy that your wonderful college hall is the only place in the wide world. Don't miss an opportunity when it offers itself; do not be sleepless over it to the detriment of your studies and health. Be composed, wait and work with confidence, the glorious future will be yours.

Madhav, as desired by his master, opened himself to the light emanating the fragrance of the enchanting quality of the soul, as petal opens after petal, quietly without agitation, for the pride and joy and smile of those to whom he belongs by his natural environment.

He had also learnt from his master the 'Secret of Success' mantra which reads as follows: ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECT QUIETLY WITHOUT TALKING OF IT TO ANYONE".

When he was elected Secretary of the Debating Union of the Government Karnatak College, Kapali Sastry had sent his best wishes on 25.7.1936: "...go on adding success to success, budding orator, until and

long after the speeches of the great Sir T* (a pet name given to Madhav by a brother of his) are published for the benefit of posterity and not for contemporaries alone" (*Mother and I*, p. 31).

Kapali Sastry's sincere wish and prophecy had come true. Doubting Thomases can walk into any good library and look at M.P. Pandit's books written on a plethora of subjects. They are mostly the lectures he delivered round the globe.

While it is true that Sri Kapali Sastry was responsible for grooming Madhav as a powerful orator and shaping his future as a spiritual aspirant, it is also true that he discouraged certain other tendencies in him and advised moderation in still other directions.

Once Madhav made a fledgling attempt at verse writing in English and sent his effusion to his master for comments. Writers the world over unanimously agree that the rejection slips from the Japanese editors and publishers are in a class by themselves. The Japanese have a very clever way of saying 'no'. The letter that Sri Kapali Sastry wrote, in response to Madhav's poem, quoted below in full, would out-Japanese the Japanese:

> "I am in receipt of your letter of the 4th instant and propose to write a few lines in response to the request you have made at the close of your letter in regard to the lines in verse you have enclosed therein. I find the poetry fairly well sprouted with the promise of budding in the right season, and given

* after the name of a famous Dewan of Baroda State in those times.

favourable conditions one fine morning it may well be in bloom.

"I suppose you do not find in me an authority on all conceivable subjects; hence it is that I confine myself to a general remark and refrain from sitting in judgement over the young poet whose aspiration for a lived Truth and higher Guidance flamed up by intelligent thought and fine sentiment finds metrical expression in these flowing lines, 48 in number. I have stated this much with confidence and I suppose this is sufficient for the purpose.

"If I do not say more, if I do not enter into the details of scanning, feet, rhyme and all the rest of the rules of metrical composition, it is because my knowledge of the technique of English poetry is zero, while the very imperfect awakening in me of the aesthetic sense of sound and measure and suggested beauty of thought feeling or sentiment is perfectly justified if not positively supported by the total absence of an active interest in this muse.

"But I may revert to this subject and throw some hints on the conditions that must favour a poet if he is to be a success; since you are now wedded to *Parikshā* and the auspicious moment is approaching (*Shubamuhurta*) and a success is expected to be the issue, you have to take a different attitude towards the courtship of *Kavitā*. Even if the latter makes advances you cannot afford to spend time with her now, and you know bigamy is illegitimate in English law. Keep the proposal in abeyance, turn a deaf ear

to her advances, ignore all rules of chivalry and if after the season her interest abides with you withstanding the trials of your apparent indifference to the engagement, then certainly you can resume the courtship. Then afterwards, if you succeed as a poet, even if it is a partial success, there will be music in Heaven even though there may be no marriage here" (*Mother and I*, pp. 13–14).

Rejection slip apart, does it not read like one of Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son? Does it not resemble the advice given by Polonius to his son Laertes?

Yes! There lies the genius of Kapali Sastry as a teacher. In every letter he wrote to Madhav, he reminded him of the forthcoming degree examination and pressed him to concentrate on his studies.

The expected ordeal came at last to Madhav in the month of March 1937.

March is the cruellest month of the year, breeding doubts and anxiety in students—students ready for the ordeal, students yet to know the titles of their text books.

Madhav belonged to the first category of students. But who is not afraid of the Sphinx? On 25th March 1937, Kapali Sastry wrote an encouraging letter to him: "Go free and fearless to the examination hall, answer the questions with full presence of mind, return to Sirsi after the 3 1/2 days exam. Consult Anna and fix your programme. It does not matter if it is later slightly changed" (*Mother and I*, p. 44).

Madhav's irresistible urge to go to Pondicherry and get blessed by the Mother at Sri Aurobindo Ashram made him take the examination with true and tranquil confidence.

Examinations were over. He heaved a sigh of relief. He was sure of his success. It was time for Father Time to write his next chapter.

VII

All days in man's life are memorable in one way or the other; some are more memorable than the others; but only one is bound to be the most memorable—depending upon the situation.

April 4, 1937 was the most memorable day in Madhav's life.

In fact, he was longing (craving would be the right word) for the day.

He had already reached Pondicherry. He was sharing food and shelter with Kapali Sastry.

As promised earlier, his mentor had fixed an appointment with the Mother for Madhav, and accompanied him to her .

Madhav had never before seen her in flesh and blood. He stood face to face with her and had a full view of her splendid face, clear and luminous.

He made pranam and on looking up found her looking into him in a concentrated way. Aren't our eyes the windows on our soul?

He broke into tears.

Twenty five years later, Madhav recorded in the 'Preface' to the first of his four volume work *Mother of Love* thus: "Speaking today in 1965, in the 87th year of her golden body through every pore of which seep the soothing drops of Love Divine, through the limpid blue eyes of which stream forth torrents of melting compassion, this writer cannot but recall the first day he met her, over twenty-five years ago. Oh, the marvel of that moment! His soul burst out of its prison-bars in a flood of tears and tears and tears and each time he looked up to her, she spoke through her indrawn eyes in the only language they have ever spoken to him thereafter, the language of Love".

His were the tears of joy. His joy was akin to that of a child seeing his mother after a long interval.

Three weeks later Kapali Sastry in the course of a talk with the Mother referred to Madhav and said, "He is only nineteen. No wonder he is emotional".

"Yes, he is a nice boy," she said approvingly.

"He shows a lot of interest in the Ashram. He likes to bathe forever in your sea of love... But his brother Sundarrao's idea is that Madhav being only 19, could have education till 21—even this is not against his inclination, and that he should grow so strong that he would not go back once he takes to 'spiritual life'."

"Yes. It is in a way good," appreciated the Mother.

"The boy has a vital push in him," continued Kapali.

"Yes, that I see. Is he a speaker?" queried the Mother.

"Yes, Mother!" he replied and complimented his disciple by saying, "In five minutes or at a moment's notice at times, he delivers an address".

With the blessings of the Mother, with the good wishes of his master, Madhav moved to Bombay to do a course in commerce.

The very first letter that the postman at Bombay delivered to Madhav was from his Anna, and Guiding Spirit—Sri Kapali Sastry.

Like a child presented with a big chocolate bar, he beamed with joy. He tore it open and read:

> Your passing the B.A. this year is a happy coincidence with your moving from the mofussil to the metropolis, from a youthful moment to a manly hour, from a world of fancy and falsehood to a realm of Reality and Truth. May you by the blessings of the Gracious Mother progress and prosper in the ways of the truthful and the noble is my fervent prayer on your behalf.
>
> "Remember us" is the mantra for you. It means that you are expected to refer inwardly to Them every problem or plan of thought, feeling and action in order that you may get the right guidance in the hour of need. What more do you need?
>
> You know I am and should be proud of you; I know Madhav is good, 'a nice boy'. I can add, Madhav is an honourable man (no longer a youthful boy) who would stoop to nothing therein the world of fashion that would be derogatory to the dignity of

his noble soul (superior to many around) or dangerous to the contact with the Holiest of the holies.

I am happy, Madhav, somehow you have passed the year with success in many respects. Indeed it is creditable. My best wishes are with you, my very heart is with you for your success, happiness and strength" (*Mother and I*, pp. 47–48).

That was how the master kept a constant vigil on the young 'honourable man'. That was how the Mother had given the right guidance to her 'nice boy'.

"The ideal way for the disciple is to do what the Guru wants him to do without questioning, without thinking of himself." Madhav was an ideal disciple.

Bombay, in spite of its many attractions for the youth, failed to distract the attention of Madhav from his studies. Such was the influence of his guru on him. The best in him gained larger and larger control over the rest of his being and its activities had instilled cheer and strength into him.

To the delight of everyone interested in Madhav, he completed the B.Com. course with a first in Law.

There was nothing that would prevent him from joining the Ashram and come under the nursing care of the Mother. He was 21. Sundarrao gladly saw him off to Pondicherry.

What is it that really attracted him to the Mother? Is it her philosophy?

"No. It is her personality" pat comes his reply. "Kapali Sastry and Sri Aurobindo too have attracted

me only by their personalities, and not with their ideas".

What does the Mother mean to him?

"Everything"—answers his whole being.

And what does he know of her?

"A little. But that little has made all else tasteless for me unless her breath is there".

To the citizens of Pondicherry, the Mother is the builder of the Ashram. To the spiritual aspirants she is a Guru. To the sadhaks in the Ashram she is the spiritual mother. To a few realized souls she stands revealed as the Avatar, Incarnation of Grace, 'love moulded into a face'. To Madhav she is SHE.

What does he mean by saying 'she is SHE'?

One has to read what he has written in the 'Preface' to the *Mother of Love* to know about the importance he gives to the Ashram and his 'SHE':

> Whatever the form the Ashram as an organisation may assume to meet the exigencies of the community, to us sadhaks it is and it will continue to be what it has always been: our Mother's Home. We came here because our Mother is here, we live here because she is present here and we will follow her wherever she is—not merely in this life but in all lives to come. All our lives are centred round her person, even as all life in the Ashram is woven round her Personality. Every leaf, every brick in the Ashram vibrates with only one note, Mother, Mother! The entire Ashram is so much permeated

with the presence of the Mother that some years ago, a visitor—a Dutchman of some consequence, if I remember aright—asked the Mother if this was not a dictatorship. All around were taken aback, incensed. The Mother did not take offence. She nodded and added with a smile, "Benevolent dictatorship!" Indeed a divine lordship under whose hegemony we die to live.

If to us it is the Home of God into whose portals we are grateful to be admitted, what is the Ashram to her? To the Mother, the Ashram is her own extended Body in which she receives all who seek the Light of Truth, nourishes their growth with her own lifeblood and builds up a reservoir of a Truth-Consciousness which shall ensure to Man a New life of terrestrial Immortality. Naturally, human terms and human values have no relevance to her. She sees and works in terms of Forces that are at play and knows that men and circumstances are only the physical ends of these invisible agents that are battling for the domination of the earth. The Ashram is for her the chosen field where the ancient combat between the army of Light and the hosts of Darkness shall at last be decided. The adversary has all the means of material power, wealth and numbers at his disposal. She has only one means which is at once her weapon and her armour: LOVE.

With sheer love she has come into this world of hate and falsehood to front the Enemy in his own fief. Unknown to man for whose deliverance she has

come, she developed her physical embodiment into a live mould for the Earth's aspiration and when she stepped on the scene, it was Sri Aurobindo, the seer sempiternal, who proclaimed her advent to the sons of God and laid at her feet the domains of the three worlds awaiting transformation, placed in her hands all the treasures of the Spirit he had garnered from of old.

Such is She, Love Incarnate, Emperor of our hearts, whose one single look is enough to transport us to heights of heroism, extremes of self-abnegation, sublimities of ecstasy. To serve her in whatever way she allows us to do is our life's highest privilege. To see her, to get a word from her gives a sense of fulfilment to our deepest soul.

Madhav joined the Ashram in 1939 and had laid himself as a slave of her love, with no other aim in life, except to serve her and those who love her.

"When I do not physically work for her, I think of her. When I do not think of her, I speak of her. When I do not speak of her, I feel her and am lost in her," wrote M.P. Pandit in his 'Preface' to *The Mother and Her Mission*.

It was Madhav's second meeting with the Mother. He bowed to her.

She placed her hand on his head. She looked into him again till he smiled and with emotion told her: "I am Thine, my Mother".

She nodded.

"Entirely," he continued.

She nodded again.

When he made a movement to turn back and go, she said, "I shall give you a flower".

She gave a red rose-bud.

Madhav took it with all humility. While carrying it home he pondered all the way over why she had given a bud instead of a flower.

The amazing revelation astonished Madhav.

VIII

Madhav has learnt his preliminary lesson from the Mother. He has understood that the Ashram he has joined is a spiritual laboratory.

The rose-bud she gave him bloomed to reveal the Mother's message:

> "Man must cease to be a closed individual. He must open his windows to the breath of the universal sky. He must widen his range of activity, enlarge his mental horizon, extend his consciousness to embrace larger and larger segments of life. He must expand his concerns. The individual man must grow into the universal man" (*The Indian Spirit*, p. 104).

It was quite a new turn. He realized that he stood on a height that looked towards greater heights. He prayed to Anna and his 'SHE' to keep him always in this upward current.

Kapali Sastry whom Madhav describes as one in whom his petty self merged long ago generally offered his wisdom of the Vedas, Upanishads, Tantra Sastra and yoga to him. His direct contact with the masters Sri Aurobindo and the Mother helped him go through the rigorous discipline and razor sharp *sadhana* of integral yoga under the meticulous eyes of the latter.

As days passed on Madhav began to feel that strange riches were sailing to him from the unseen, and days were becoming a happy pilgrim march. He was sure that a new world-knowledge was broadening from within.

What is this *sadhana* of integral yoga?

"All life is yoga," declared Sri Aurobindo in 1914 when he started his journal *Arya*, and he meant that "every field of life, every element of life has to be permeated with the spirit of yoga".

What is to be done? Where do we begin? How do we proceed?

The only way to get answers to these questions is to listen to the chief exponent of integral yoga today—M.P. Pandit:

> "In this yoga we begin where we are. Each starts from the position in which he finds himself as a result of his past development. Consequently the Sadhana of each is distinct from that of another. All the same there are certain broad lines of inner life which are common to all and which embrace both the inner and the outer life. To begin with, the first requirement—

in all yogic effort—is aspiration. It is a seeking, a yearning for the truths of a higher or a deeper life, e.g. purity, dedication, love, harmony, etc. all of which are indispensable for any change from the lower into the higher life of the spirit. This aspiration is to be breathed into every activity of the being, on every plane of its movement. For instance, on the physical plane, in the movements of the body, it translates itself into an effort of a purposive gathering of energies, a willed orientation of them Godward and a sustained processing of them in the way of cleansing. This automatically involves the counterpart of aspiration, i.e. rejection. It calls for the rejection of all that is contrary to what is aspired for. In the present context it means naturally a scrupulous avoidance of all dispersion of energies, control of their direction and elimination of all that taints their quality. Now this double operation of aspiration and rejection has necessarily to be applied at every minute of one's life, in every sphere of one's activity. If the flame of aspiration is once lit and fed with ardour and sincerity, every situation offers an opportunity for the sadhaka to test for himself the progress he has made and the leeway still to be made up. This is the utility of works or life for yoga.

But the physical is not the only phase of our existence. There is that side of man which is governed by life-force, the vital part as it is termed in our Yoga. The dominating drive of this vital life is desire of self-aggrandisement, self-assertion and self-ap-

propriation. The demand of aspiration is most imperative on this plane of the being. Beginning with the smallest movement, extending to larger and larger fields, this vitiating element of ego and desire has to be relentlessly ejected from the consciousness. One has only to try sincerely to do this and one realises in no time how difficult a task it is. While the negative aspect of this effort at vital purification is one of rejection, the positive is one of self-dedication and self-surrender to the Divine. Both proceed simultaneously and reinforce each other.

Rendered on a still higher plane of our existence i.e. the mind, this discipline calls for a wholesale rejection of all mental activity which is not relevant to the upward endeavour. Secondly, it entails a steady denial of all thoughts and ideas which tend, if not aim, to weaken the higher aspiration. Negatively, this means an elimination of the whole crowd of useless thoughts, rejection of contrary and inimical suggestions and other mental formations; positively, one has to build up a climate of concentration, harmony and peace in the mind, in which atmosphere alone the right kind of thoughts are formed or received and shaped. This too, it will be recognised, is an activity that has to be pursued at every moment of one's life, whether in an office, in a market place or in a prayer room.

All the demarcations or segmentations are on the outside; inside all intermingle, all are one. What is done at one point has its consequences at every other

point. This yoga proceeds upon this basic truth and can be pursued successfully only when life is accepted as co-extensive with Yoga" (*All Life is Yoga*—First Series, pp. 4–6).

Madhav progressed drawing inspiration, guidance and light from the compact treasure-house of Kapali Sastry's scholarly writings that represent a synthesis of the traditions of the Veda, Tantra and Yoga, from the seven oceans of Sri Aurobindo's works, and from the smooth-flowing waters of the Mother's writings.

Madhav's consciousness is the combined wealth of all these teachers.

It is said 'success' is 5% inspiration and 95% perspiration. A cliche indeed; yet that is how a successful man comes into being. Haven't we heard people say "Success approaches those who are very busy"?

Inspiration he had from his masters. He perspired with all his will-power. To his success Nature too had contributed its share. It endowed him with an astounding accuracy of memory.

Kapali Sastry was once clearing the doubts of a few visitors about Vedic Rishis and their *medhāśakti*. "They were *ekacchandagrahi*," he said and rushed to translate the word into English, "that is immediate understanding without having to repeat it from memorisation".

"Unbelievable!" One among the doubters raised his voice.

"I have not come across such intellectual feats," said another.

"Is it possible for you to illustrate this?" asked yet another in a serious tone.

Kapali Sastry pondered for a moment before giving an answer. Just at that time Madhav entered the house after his evening stroll on the Beach Road.

"Ah! Here is the answer," he said pointing at Madhav. "What is the latest news?" he asked affectionately.

Statue-like Madhav stood where he was. He closed his eyes and reproduced the exact version of De Mello's radio news of ten minutes duration he had listened to on the Beach Road with the same intonation and words.

As soon as he finished, he bowed to his master and went inside to attend to other work.

Amazed at the astounding memory of accuracy and convinced of what an *ekacchandagrahi* could be, the visitors stole a second glance at Madhav who got himself engaged in his work.

Twelve years of rigorous *tapasya* brought him success.

M.P. Pandit emerged as a writer with the publication of his first book *Grace of the Great and Other Essays* in August 1950. It is a collection of nine essays he had contributed to different periodicals, mostly connected with the Ashram, during the years 1948–1950.

He was in his early thirties. He was on the threshold of a literary career.

Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his physical body, after a brief illness, in the early hours of December 5, 1950.

Madhav's experiences with the Yogis' Yogi who chose Pondicherry as his "cave to tapasya" were something to reminisce about. Thirty-three years later M.P. Pandit recorded his reminiscences in the 'Preface' to his book titled *Sri Aurobindo*:

> ...I had my first Darshan of Sri Aurobindo on August 15 (1937). It was overwhelming and I felt the only thing comparable to him was the Himalayas. I still remember the slight smile on his face moulded of compassion.
>
> Then in April 1939, on the eve of my coming away to the ashram, I had a curious desire to travel by plane from Bombay to Poona as I thought that once I joined the ashram I would not leave it and there would be no opportunity to travel by air thereafter. So I wrote to Pondicherry and Sri Aurobindo wrote, in pencil, 'He can fly'. That was his first communication to me and it thrilled me to the core. I mattered to him, didn't I?
>
> The next occasion was some time in 1947 when I wrote my first article. It was on Meditation and as it was being read out to him, he remarked that he had heard it before. Nirodbaran who was reading it assured him that it was the first time that it had come up. But Sri Aurobindo insisted that he had heard every word of it. When I learnt of it, I felt so humble.
>
> Yet another time, I had written a reply to Adhar Chandra Das's criticism of a book by Sri Aurobindo in

the *Calcutta Review*. On going through it, Sri Aurobindo added a line: The physical mind also thinks.

It opened a vista for me.

I mention these few incidents as outer tokens of a relation that developed steadily and was made possible by the solicitude and grace of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. My being was completely taken over by his Personality whose diverse aspects appealed to me more than his philosophy which took time to enter and reshape my mind.

He was so human. Once when his sister and other members of the household complained to him bitterly about the bad behaviour of the cook, he called him aside and said, in his usual impersonal tone, "It seems you are behaving rudely, do not do so." We do not know what the others felt; we only know that the culprit went away smiling.

He was so full of wit. When a British author wrote that Sri Aurobindo was a man who never smiles, Sri Aurobindo added, "but who always jokes".

He was so simple. When the ashram was formed and the Mother took to him a list of things required for each *sadhaka*, he was surprised and said that a *sadhaka* needs nothing more than a mat, a *kuja* and a thing or two that way. He did not understand why furniture, like table, chair, cot, almirah was necessary. For he himself had all along managed in Pondicherry with the bare minimum. There was, for instance, just one towel among seven inmates of the house. Each one would use the towel after bath and

hang it on the clothesline to dry. Sri Aurobindo would be the last to use it.

He was so undemanding. He would never ask anything for himself. During the *Arya* days he would be waiting for tea in the afternoons before starting typing for the journal. One day the person in charge fell asleep and the tea failed to come up. Sri Aurobindo sat quietly waiting and did not call for it. Before his eyes came the figure of 4 in a golden hue. And precisely at 4 p.m. the apologetic attendant appeared with the tea.

He was so unprepossessing. He moved with all people as with equals. He frowned upon *sadhaks* scolding others and defended the right of every person to follow his nature.

He was so humble. He would learn from anyone, from anywhere. One day he was sitting in the Guest House verandah upstairs, in serious contemplation —obviously he had a problem. A familiar figure, Kulla Swami, as he was known, (a short non-descript ascetic with none-too-good a reputation) was passing by in the street below. Suddenly he turned, came up to where Sri Aurobindo was sitting, lifted a tea cup which was on the table, turned it upside down, put it right and was gone. Later Sri Aurobindo remarked that his difficulty had been solved: the cup has to be emptied before it is filled anew. No wonder the Mother once said that the only humble man she had met in her life was Sri Aurobindo (P. vi–vii).

A feeling of profound regret came over Madhav. He tried to forget his sorrow in his literary activities. He didn't know that he was waiting for the return of unhappiness.

Within three years (1953) Kapali Sastry who wrote to Madhav "The best in me of course is at your disposal" passed away.

Sorrow gnawing his heart, Madhav flipped open the file of letters from his affectionate Anna and mentor, Sri Kapali Sastry, which he had treasured in a chest.

His eyes stood rivetted to the lines that read:

> "...In any case, be more cautious, avoid dejection, strengthen yourself, always remember that Kapali Anna stands by you and will do all he can to help you to recover the many-sided strength that alone can lead you to the Glory that is yours" (*Mother and I*, p. 27).

Hot tears from Madhav's eyes threatened to trickle out. But they found no outlet. They evaporated.

Yogis have no tears to shed.

IX

Madhav was not yet forty. Yet he had realised the futility of human relations. There seemed to be nothing to stand upon. He did not know how to proceed.

For a moment he asked himself, "Why am I here?"

"You are here only because of Mother." It was his

conscience that spoke. It continued: "Because she is here, you are here. You love, she loves—that is all that matters".

"She too has to withdraw her physical body one day or the other... After her, what?" It was the voice of neither Madhav nor his conscience. Perhaps it was the enemy—Doubter, the Great.

Dark clouds began to encircle him.

"Nobody is for anybody. Only the Divine will be for you if you are for the Divine." From somewhere came the voice of the Mother.

Her words kept ringing in his mind.

The dark clouds fled like an army in rout.

In a flash a whole pathway had lighted for him and the strength given to tread it.

Madhav plunged headlong into the ocean of knowledge. When one knows more, more deeply, one desires only to know still more.

He kept up the habit of writing and created a magnetic field around himself.

Translations of Sri Kapali Sastry's Sanskrit works into English kept him engaged for several years. It was a homage he paid to his mentor. "It is Kapali," commented the Mother, "From beginning to end it is the spirit of Kapali".

Books on the philosophy, yoga and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; books on topics of spiritual interest like Japa, Dhyana, Kundalini yoga; studies in the Tantra, the Veda, the Upanishads; works on related subjects like occultism, reincarnation, philo-

sophy and psychology; explications of Sri Aurobindo's literary works in the light of his yoga; reference books on Sri Aurobindo's philosophical works; and also books of general interest poured out like a torrent from his ever-active pen, and flooded the bookshops in many parts of the globe.

It is said of Shakespeare that he wrote his plays for the common man. Perhaps that is the reason why his plays are for the stage and not for the closet.

What is said of Shakespeare's works can be said of Sri M.P.Pandit's too. The common man is really indebted to him for bringing down Philosophy and Spirituality from their high pedestals and serving him to quench his thirst for knowledge.

Yes. He made philosophy and spirituality, the one time private possession of scholars and pundits, the property of the public by making them eminently readable and easily understandable. This he did as a sadhana.

HIGHER AND BROADER was the mantra the Mother gave to Madhav. Kapali Anna even after withdrawing from the physical plane, was very much with him, perhaps taking pride in his crowning glory.

By patient accumulation and analysis of the evidence available, Madhav acquired wisdom. His reading and writing ended only when sleep took command at night. Even in sleep while his body took rest his mind was busy. When awake he made much use of his dreams.

On 18th Nov.1973, when Madhav was getting ready after his morning exercises a little after 3 a.m. a friend

of his knocked at his door and said in a choking tone: "Mother had left her body at 7.25 p.m. last night".

Madhav rushed to have her Darshan in the meditation hall.

Nirodbaran, Sri Aurobindo's physician and amanuensis was standing by the side of the Mother's body. He came nearer Madhav, took his hands into his and said in a sad tone: "The blood pressure was going down and down. The heart failed at last".

Madhav said "You say the cause was heart failure. But let me tell you the heart failure was not the cause. The heart failure was the result of the withdrawl".

On the next day in his radio talk Madhav said, "The sea of Love that is the Mother swells into an ocean".

Later he wrote:

> She is there looming over the whole world. And for those of us who are open to her, who have love for her, who have devotion for her, these act like magnets to which her consciousness, her love, her force, come pouring down in floods. Keep that connection. Have a loving thought for her; think of her with love. Cheerfully, gratefully, joyfully, keep yourself at the disposal of the Mother's Consciousness. For her there is no death" (*The Mother and Her Mission*, p. 18).

Since Madhav was sure that "She is here", he was able to continue his sadhana uninterruptedly with all tensions relieved.

Madhav made a trip outside Pondicherry on 15.5.1976 to participate in a function for the release of Vol.II of Rig Veda written by Sri Kapali Sastry. This marked the beginning of his mission.

Newspapers both in India and abroad began to splash news items under the catchy headings:

"Lecture Tour by the Sage of Sri Aurobindo Ashram".

"Holy Man Spreads Wisdom Among an Imperfect World".

'The Aurobindo Ashram and M.P.Pandit'.

'Sun Shine of Love Tours the World'.

'The citizen of the World Calls for a World Union'.

'Holy Man from the Sacred Soil'.

'A Spiritual Teacher from a Spiritual Centre'.

M.P.Pandit made whirlwind tours round the globe, gave lectures, participated in the seminars, organised meetings and conferences, gave interviews only to spread the message of Sri Aurobindo—the all embracing spiritual discipline called Integral Yoga.

In all his lectures he stressed the need of the hour—the change from the self-centred man to the Universal man:

> Man still clings to his old, old primitive sense of self-interest. No doubt the range of his 'self' has been steadily compelled to expand with the growth of humanity; his interests have widened to include those of his family, his clan, his society, his country

and so on. But as in the story of the monkey who had no hesitation to put down her baby and stand upon it to save herself from the rising waters of the well into which they had fallen, when it comes to his ultimate limit, man shrinks to his primitive proportions and is literally self-centred. This is the basic disease.

Man tends to look at everything, every movement, from his own narrow standpoint. How does it affect him, his immediate interests? His reaction and his course of action are fundamentally determined by this attitude. This vitiates all. The world at large has moved miles and miles away from this milestone of ego that was a necessary stage in Nature's evolution when she had to fix a centralising agent in the midst of the flow and flux of life. But what was once a help has now become a bar. Unless man breaks out of this petty circle of ego, self-reference, he cannot hope to survive in the developing world-movement

That is why the stress of all culture, religion and spiritual tradition has been on self-enlargement, self-transcendence. Each one is called upon to widen his vision, his range of feeling and activity so that the individual identifies himself with more and more of the universe around. He comes to realise his oneness with the universe at all levels. As he grows in knowledge and experience, he perceives how his mind and the thoughts that he thinks are part of the general Mind of humanity, his life-force is only a wave of the universal Life, his very physical body is made of the substance of the Universal Matter. At

his highest, he realises that his very soul, the core of his being, is a portion, *amśa*, of the Divinity that is manifest in the Universe. This knowledge, this experience of the universal base, universal context and universal goal, can alone right the present imbalance and set man on his legs again.

Man must break out of his limited individual shell and breathe the freer air of the universal life. The 'island ego' must join 'its continent'. Then alone can man be whole, the conflict between man and men will have become a thing of the past and harmony set in the general life of mankind (*Towards Universal Man*, pp. 5–6).

Thanks to his mentor, Sri Kapali Sastry, who had trained him so well as an orator that M.P. Pandit articulated his ideas before packed audiences. He was able to give in 20 minutes a world of information which would generally take many hours to give.

He was no doubt the instrument or rather the mouthpiece of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, an exponent of their teaching. Yet he was not a carbon copy of his masters. That is something rare to come across in a disciple. He was a completely original person. Perhaps that is the reason for the quick sales of his books. No wonder they run to several reprints within a short period. He has nearly 150 books to his credit. It is difficult to say the exact number of his books.

At home too through talks at the *Sat-Sang* gatherings

and through his monthly *Service Letter*, M.P. Pandit continued to fulfil his mission.

During the course of a little more than five decades as a sadhak in the ashram, M.P. Pandit had reached a great stage in the ladder of self-transcendence.

Judging from the crowd that collected to listen to his *Sat-Sang*, from the wide popularity of his *Service Letter* with its nearly 20 years of uninterrupted publication, from the volley of letters he received from the spiritual seekers round the globe, from the wide sales of his books and pre-recorded cassettes one can conclude that his mission has acquired a new character and his personality new dimensions.

He is a Universal Man.

In spite of all his achievements as a Yogi, seer, and sage he disliked to be called a Guru. In fact, he called all gurus old fashioned. In an interview given to *The Pensacola Journal* in Florida, M.P. Pandit said:

> "...Gurus were once custodians of spiritual knowledge which was not open to the public for fear it would be misused. But today, there is nothing secret, nothing guarded, it is not necessary to keep the public in the dark. Anyone who wants to seek can have the knowledge. Human consciousness has grown so much that the common man is ready to become his own spiritual guide. What is the necessity of surrendering your own common sense to a guru who runs your life for you? In today's world, men should think for themselves" (*Pandit In America*, p. 55).

X

He spoke and ceased and left the earthly scene. . . .
But still a cry was heard in the infinite,
And still to the listening soul on mortal earth
A high and far imperishable voice
Chanted the anthem of eternal love

—*Sri Aurobindo (Savitri)*

He who chooses the spiritual path as his way of life is bound to make a progress—a progress that leads to humility, selflessness, purity of thought, emotion, motivation in action. But this spiritual progress can have its own side effects too—Spiritual Ego.

M.P. Pandit was not unaware of it. And so he had seen to it that all attempts made by EGO to creep into him would end in failure. A believer in the words of the Lord as perpetuated in the Gita, he knew for certain that True renunciation is of desire and ego.

Spiritualists are of the opinion that the ego is found to be only a surface formation in nature. They call it a 'pseudo-self'.

What then is the real self?

Here is an answer from M.P. Pandit:

"The real self, the true centre of the being is deeper—it is the soul. And the characteristic quality of the soul is love. Any one who shifts his centre of reference from the nature-ego to the soul within, finds the soul-action of love spontaneous. And it is

the destiny of man in evolution to displace the rule of the ego-self by the reign of the true self, the soul" (*Towards Universal Man*, p. 384).

The first thing laid down by Thiruvalluvar in his immortal Tamil classic *Thirukkural*, which encapsulates the wisdom of the ages, dealing with learning is the duty of relating one's conduct to one's knowledge:

> "Learn soundly all that deserve to be learnt; Act then accordingly".

M.P. Pandit was no dry metaphysician. He had conscientiously translated into practice the knowledge he had gathered in all these years. He succeeded in replacing "the rule of the ego-self by the reign of the true-self". The ego dropped away automatically. And with the true soul guiding his life, a natural movement of love took its place. He spontaneously radiated a pure and unconditional love to all around him. And people came to bathe in the spiritual radiance of his sunshine of love and went back refreshed and nourished by the lingering warmth in their hearts.

How sincerely a man is loved, is judged by the gathering of men and women who come to pay their last respects.

On March 15, 1993 M.P. Pandit's *bhūta-sharira*, the material body, was kept for public's view at his residence.

Men and women, both old and young, turned in large numbers carrying flowers of different hues and

sizes to pay their homage to their departed friend, counsellor and guide.

Each in their turn had their final glimpse of the man whom they loved as a father, a brother and even as a mother offered the flowers at his feet and moved to pray in silence.

A couple of days later, Sraddhalu Ranade, a young man brought up from his childhood days by M.P. Pandit sat down to tell the world "the external causes for the seemingly sudden departure" of his spiritual father. As his thoughts raced back, his pen began to move forward:

> Panditji left his material body on the 14th of March 1993 at 2.42 p.m. in Madras—exactly three months before his 75th birth Anniversary.
>
> Our human mind seeks external causes for his seemingly sudden departure and wants to know what happened medically. Actually the decision to leave was taken months ago and the medical causes were only incidental. Those of us who were physically close to him had noted that since October last year a new spirit of a defiant detachment had begun to manifest itself in him. With a sense of urgency he began a series of articles boldly and incisively clearing elements of confusion that lay before all of us. These articles appeared beginning with the November issue of the *Service Letter*. If he had any last words of guidance, they are in these articles and in the last two Sat-sangs that he gave on "Tapas".
>
> Simultaneously he began to make alternative

arrangements for all those who were physically dependent on him. He went through his old papers, discarding what he felt had no relevance for posterity. He refused to start new projects.

Beginning in November he began to have all over his body a progressively increasing itching which somehow could not be controlled with regular medicine, and which in February reached a point where it would not even let him sleep. At that stage he expressed for the first time his intention to leave. And from the 20th of February he completely stopped meeting people or receiving phone calls.

After a brief stay at the Ashram Nursing Home he was advised to consult a specialist in Madras and, though disinclined to leave Pondicherry, he accepted it as a disciplined "patient".

With a new medication in Madras, the itching was controlled at once. He had a happy "Last Supper" on the 9th of March with his two hosts, the three of us attending on him, and a friend. The next day during some additional tests there were serious medical complications for which he had to be hospitalised.

The days that followed were a blur of constant dangers and difficulties pressing upon us from every side, and a soft cocoon of Her Grace protecting us at every moment and smoothening the way. Throughout the treatment he was fully conscious and alert. And at every stage he was consulted before anything was tried on him—even for a small injection he would first be asked for his consent.

In spite of the intense pain that he was undergoing both in Pondicherry and in Madras, he was calm and detached: there was no suffering. I had never seen him so completely drawn into the physical body. Perhaps it was a necessary part of his physical sadhana.

During the last three days he clearly expressed his decision to leave. And on the 14th morning he had a refreshing wash and an oil massage. As a result of certain medical arrangements at 1.30, for the first time he was able to rest his body in a completely normal condition. I was alone in the room praying to the Mother to take care of Her child, when at 2.42 She drew him into Her arms.

We all sat there numb and confused. I held his feet and for the next twenty minutes a powerful soothing current flowed into my arms.

* * * *

We took him back to our host's residence for an hour. A blissful smile played on his lips joined by a twinkle in his half-closed eyes. He looked radiantly beautiful.

Later at night we returned home to Pondicherry.

Friends, acquaintances and well-wishers from all over the world came to pay their respects to the material envelope of one who had been a perfect instrument of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. An unshakable Peace was manifest throughout and none was there unmoved by the powerful Presence.

In the afternoon of the 15th, in a moving ceremony we performed the last rites. My final view of him was in the form of a glowing statue of a god. A deep gratitude surged in me for this being of love, light and knowledge. He was to me and to all of us a perfect guide, friend, mother and father, and in the last few days a perfect child.

Early next morning his *Asthi* (relics) were gathered and placed in a bundle in my hands. A powerful charge surged into my body. I felt as if I was holding a ball of sheer power radiating an intense magnetic current.

We reached the sea-shore where a perfect golden sunrise awaited us. I swam into the calm and translucent waters and hurled the ball of power in my hands towards the supramental sun. Many on the shore felt a flash of white light.

At 10.00 we visited Sri Aurobindo's room to offer our prayers and thanks. I do not normally see any visions but when I stood in the Meditation Hall, an image appeared spontaneously before my eyes and stayed for a while. I saw in a flood of pure white light the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and at their feet Panditji and Kapali Shastri. I was at peace (*Service Letter*, No: 244, pp. 1–3).

While it is true that none would be able to see the departed friend and guide in flesh and blood with one's mortal eyes, he continues, to live and hold a pride of place in the hearts of millions.

M.P. Pandit lives in his work. He lives in his consciousness. There is nothing to worry about. There is nothing to grieve over his physical departure.

He who has read him, he who has understood him would know what is actually meant by "departure".

Way back in 1981, in a series of lectures delivered under the Sri Aurobindo-Mira Lecture Endowment Scheme at the South Gujarat University in Surat (Later collected under the title *Introducing Savitri*), M.P. Pandit explained:

> When a soul finds it impossible to progress, it just drops the body, it does not stay for a minute more, it knows that that is the maximum it could expect from that body and it leaves. In appearance there may be a sudden accident, failure of the heart, or whatever. That is the odyssey of the soul. (p. 21)

In a talk after the Mother's withdrawal he recalled an incident:

> I remember how on the Mother's birthday, the 21st of February, 1973, when I met her, in the course of a few words that I had with her, I said on a spontaneous impulse, "If by taking my life thy physical life can be prolonged by a day, please take it." She in-drew for a moment, held my hand and said, "Life is eternal."

He explained how a spiritual personality becomes even more effective when no longer bound by the material body, and his power and enveloping presence

grow even more tangible. And so it is for him. His field of work in the service of the Mother is wider than ever before.

As Sraddhalu wrote in the May 1993 Service Letter:

> "Most of us are in a position to confirm this truth in our own experience. We feel him concretely present in our midst—a moment's remembrance is enough to experience that warmth and sweetness of the Mother's love which he radiated so spontaneously. We are assured that his work in the Mother's service continues more powerfully than ever before, whether to our eyes it is seen or unseen."

The spiritual odyssey of M.P. Pandit is thus unending. The work goes on.

PANDITJI AS I KNOW HIM**

During my student days I had little contact with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, though my residence was not even a couple of furlongs away from the Ashram main building. To confess, I never even tried to know who Sri Aurobindo was. All that I knew of him was that he came to Pondicherry, liked the place as everybody else, and remained here till he left his body. I also knew that he was a friend of my favourite Tamil poet Subramania Bharati. And I had had to wait for several years to associate myself with the elites of the Ashram and Sri Aurobindo's literature.

But even as a student, I was quite familiar with the name of M.P. Pandit. Quite familiar because he was a book-reviewer and I was a book-lover. I never missed reading the reviews he wrote for newspapers and journals. I liked the way he put before the readers his opinions about the books. I made clippings of his reviews and filed them in my 'Scissors and Paste'. Even today, as and when time permits, I dip into his reviews because of their everlasting value. Sometimes I read his reviews before I begin writing for I am quite sure of getting inspiration from them.

I had not met him in person, nor even seen his photograph till the year 1977. For that matter I never even knew that he is a resident of the Ashram. What an

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ignorance! Ignorance is no bliss when one is ashamed of one's ignorance.

That was the time when I started reviewing books for *Mother India*. One evening, its editor K.D. Sethna, handed me a slim but beautiful volume titled *How Do I Begin*? and said, "This is for review".

The book came as a pleasant surprise to me, for it was authored by M.P. Pandit. Till that time I was not aware of the fact that he was an author. Cursed be my ignorance!

"By Mr. M.P. Pandit! Is it his first book?" I betrayed my ignorance to Mr. K.D. Sethna.

"What do you mean? You speak as if you hadn't heard of him!"

"No, Sir. He is very familiar to me as a reviewer. But..."

"He is a very prolific writer and he has a lot of published books to his credit."

"But I haven't read any of his books."

"Well, it's not too late. You can begin with that book," Sethna said.

"Where does he live?" I asked brimming with curiosity.

Sethna laughed like an examiner at the ignorance of the candidate and said, "Quite a surprise that you don't know his residence. He is a resident of the Ashram".

I decided to meet him, but not immediately. I awaited the right opportunity.

Meanwhile I began reading *How Do I Begin*?

The book speaks of the perfect way of practising

Integral Yoga. It is in the form of a 'Do It Yourself' or 'Teach Yourself' book, aiming to be a helpful guide to the seemingly too-difficult-to-decipher philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

The first five chapters speak of the individual Sadhana and the author formulates a broad programme for the daily life of the seeker after integral perfection. And he begins getting up as early as possible. How to drive away the sleep that might be strong in the early morning? Why should we not sit on bare ground? How to abstain from participating in thoughts that rush in and distract when we are aspiring for the descent of Higher Consciousness? What sort of place would be suitable for meditation? How to observe the lights or figures or images appearing during it? What is the purpose of doing bodily exercises after meditation? To several such questions M.P. Pandit gives valuable answers from his own experience and thereby justifies the title of the book. The essence of Karma Yoga —Yoga of work—and the psychic communications are highlighted. The reader finds advices not only in matters of food and clothing but also in the matter of sleeping postures.

Speaking of collective Sadhana—association with like-minded seekers—Pandit points out that it is a 'must' "to guard against the danger of subjectivism and its attendant possibilities of fantasies and losing yourself in a world of imagination." Stress is put on punctuality , regularity, leadership, place, study period and the common theme for meditation. The author

tells us how one can find real company in the writings or utterances of God-realized persons. Doubts like "How to safeguard yourself from ego? What should one do when one is in a depressed state?" are clarified. Definitions from sage Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* and the author's lecture on the wonders of love make delightful reading. In short I enjoyed reading it in a single sitting.

January 1981 issue of *Mother India* came out of the press carrying my review. I was a young reviewer with great expectations. It was not that I expected my review to boost the sales of the book overnight, but to fetch a few words to pat my back.

A couple of weeks later when I met Mr. Sethna, he passed on an inland letter addressed to me c/o *Mother India* Office. My heart jumped for joy when I tore open the letter. Panditji didn't disappoint me. He wrote:

M.P. Pandit

camp: Bombay
22-1-1981

Dear Sir,

I have just seen your generous review of my book *How Do I Begin* in *Mother India*. I write this to thank you for the warmth and consideration extended to me.

With Kind Wishes,

Yours sincerely,
M.P. PANDIT

The letter was a green signal. I thought that I would meet Panditji when he returns from Bombay. "I must introduce myself to him. When I know every other writer in Pondicherry like the inside of my palm, how can I ever afford to miss such a great writer and thinker?" I. thought. But on second thought...Oh, I always have second thoughts! That is there in my stars. And so I backed out. "You must be introduced by a proper person," something in me said. And I was sure that the time wasn't ripe.

When I approached Mr. Manoj Das, an internationally renowned writer of fiction and an ashramite, and told him of my desire to get introduced to Mr. M.P. Pandit, he readily agreed and said: "Let us go together one day. Meanwhile let me find out his schedule and fix an appointment."

Several days passed. My desire continued to remain a desire.

In those days Mr. George Moses, a retired Superintendent of Police, a connoisseur of literature, and editor of *Youth Age*, a literary monthly from Vivekananda Nagar, Pondicherry held literary meetings on every saturday evening. Discussions on old and recent books, on literary trends and movements, and on several occasions literary gossips took place in his personal library.

On one such occasion, Mr. George Moses who was the first rung of the ladder of my literary career asked me: "Are you free tomorrow (Sunday) evening?"

"Well! I'll make myself free if you need my help," I replied.

"Let us go then You and I, tomorrow evening to Mr. M.P. Pandit's house and listen to his talk," he said showing me an invitation card.

I was taken aback for the oppurtunity to meet Panditji had come unasked.

At about 5.50 p.m. on Sunday, we entered his bungalow which was already overflowing with enthusiastic men and women, both old and young. No sooner did we take our seat on a mat spread on the floor of the big hall than we were offered a very tasty juice, extracted from lotus flowers.

Exactly at the stroke of six, Panditji made his appearance and occupied his chair. Whom did I see? I expected a scholar and writer. But I saw a sage there, truly a God-realized person. Perhaps that is the reason why people find real company in his writings and talks.

Spell-bound I sat for one full hour and Panditji gave an enlightening talk on 'Mind-Control'. The very fact that his words are still green in my memory is more than proof-enough for his fascinating talk that controlled my restless mind.

Pointing out the subtle difference between the mind and the brain he said: "Brain is an instrument of the mind and mind itself is a particular faculty of the consciousness. Consciousness is greater than the mind. Even if the mind is suspended, the consciousness is there and the consciousness has its own way of registering things and functioning, even eliminating the mental operation. So there are three things: Consciousness, mind and brain."

When the talk was over, the audience one after the other received a blessed jasmine flower from Panditji before they left. We were the last to receive the flowers. When we were about to take leave of Panditji, Mr. George Moses introduced me to him.

Panditji smiled at me. "I am happy that you have come," he said holding my hand. "Please do come again sometime later."

On that day I recorded in my diary thus: "I never thought that anyone would be able to bind my mind even for a few minutes, for it is like a young monkey. But Mr. M.P. Pandit did it with ease. A gifted man... an unforgettable personality...What a memorable day!"

"Can you review books for the journals I edit?" He asked me when I met him again. "You are a pretty reviewer."

"Of course, Sir! With pleasure."

I had already gone through a few backnumbers of his monthlies *Service Letter* and *World Union* (the latter became a quarterly) and *Advent*, a quarterly.

"You can begin with these books. The reviews are meant for *World Union*," he said handing over a couple of books.

Thus began my literary relationship with Panditji. He always had a few words of appreciation of my works that appeared now and then in various journals. He was kind enough to glance through them in spite of his tight schedule. His family members have a soft corner for me and my folktales and stories.

The next work of M.P. Pandit I reviewed was *Introducing Savitri*. September 16, 1983 issue of *Bhavan's journal* carried the review. It is a collection of lectures delivered under Sri Aurobindo-Mira lecture series of South Gujarat University during 1980–81. The author tells the story of the nearly 24,000 line epic written in blank verse, explicates the names of the characters, justifies why Sri Aurobindo subtitled his monumental work 'A legend and a Symbol' and shows us how the poet-seer unveils the symbolism behind the simple story. He comments on the poet's style and explains why Sri Aurobindo repeats certain words in consecutive lines and brings to light the central truth of his teaching: "Staying here we shall enjoy, we shall fulfill here on earth."

The theme of the lectures being 'Savitri and the New age', Pandit is very keen on showing the readers in what way *Savitri* is relevant today. Hence his discussions on the present education system, marriage, moulding the character of children, release from tension and many other enigmatic topics are thought-provoking.

"*Savitri* is not just a poem." says M.P. Pandit, "It is a mantramala uplifting you, connecting you with the center of consciousness, truth and knowledge and working out changes in your being, when you read it not as a book to be studied, but as something to be loved, something to be made a part of your life."

The book indeed instilled courage and faith into me to plunge into the fathomless ocean of the epic of Sri

Aurobindo. The poem has something to give everyone on every occasion. Even at the height of sorrow one can seek solace :

> "A darkness wallows in the paths of Time
> Or lifts its giant head to blot the stars;
> It makes a cloud of the interpreting mind
> And intercepts the oracles of the sun.
> Yet Light is there; it stands at Nature's doors:
> It holds a torch to lead the traveller in."
> (Book X, canto 3, 11:199–204)

A time came when darkness began to wallow in my path. It came in the garb of a friend who purely out of jealousy poisoned the mind of the higher authorities about me, pulled wires and gave political pressures to clip my wings so that I might not soar to greater heights. Thoroughly upset, I was unable to concentrate either in my classroom lectures or in my literary activities. I did not know how to cross the obstacle.

I wrote to Panditji to rescue me from the yoke of tension and disappointment. The response was quick. In his letter dated 8-7-1985, he sent me Mother's blessings with a note which read:

> Dear Friend,
> You must be having mental fatigue. Relax for a while. Things will pick up.

His words like that of a true friend's, came as a great comfort and support to me. And on that day when I dipped into *Savitri* I read:

"O mortal who complainst of death and fate,
Accuse none of the harms thyself hast called;
This troubled world thou hast chosen for thy home,
Thou are thyself the author of thy pain."

(Book VI, canto 2, 11: 624–627)

I ruminated over the lines and soon the yoke weighing on me heavily broke into splinters and fell from my neck. Above all, I forgave the traitor-turned friend. Jesus himself had a Judas. What gave me such a mental strength was Panditji's letter and Mother's blessings.

A couple of weeks later, I met him at his residence. He looked at me, smiled and said: "You are better now. I can see... Don't give importance to petty matters. They may gulp you down. Every man must prepare himself to face the jaws of life without flinching."

Since I have learnt to live without flinching, I find no jaws around. What a turning point in my life!

To teach me further about life, his book *Life Beautiful* fell in my hands, a review of which I wrote in the August 4, 1986 issue of *New Times Observer*.

The author opines that we have lost the art of life and have forgotten the science of living. He tells us what is beauty and how one has to make oneself beautiful. He explains the various steps one has to take to live rightly and fully. "We have first to become man—by man I mean human—before seeking to become something of

God," advises Pandit. He teahces us how to meditate for "meditation adds a new dimension to life. It deepens into quality, elevates its vision." He advises how one has to begin one's daily life and make the work a Sadhana.

"Life teaches lessons to all but not everyone learns them" writes M.P. Pandit. He makes use of his several experiences and the lessons he learnt through them to tell us the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of life. Here is an example: "Accept what providence gives you, but be ready to let go without regret when things leave you." And again "Do not speak of your troubles to others in the hope of getting sympathy and support from them. Read the advice of a retired American Admiral: 'Half the people to whom you speak do not care what happens to you and the other half are damn glad of it!'"

As I feel that the book is worthy enough to be chewed and digested, it is given its due place in my study. Sandwiched between *The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations* and F.T. Wood's *Current English Usage*, it is within my reach from my chair and I dip into it as and when time permits.

Life Beautiful gave me a lot of confidence. When a couple of publishers turned down my script *A Concise History of Pondicherry* I ventured to become my own publisher. The spirit was very willing but the purse was weak.

As usual I sought the advice of Panditji. He listened to me without batting his eyelids and then said: "I'll think about it."

Had anybody else said, "I'll think about it", it really meant "we'll forget all about it" or "Don't talk about that matter again. I can't help you."

But Panditji differs from all others in many respects. He had really thought about it.

When I met him next, he gave me an envelope and said: "This is the only thing I can do.. I give it to you and let it not weigh on you." I opened the cover to find a cheque for Rupees One Thousand. It was a substantial amount to cover the cost of the printing paper.

What a timely help! These are times when publishers of diaries invent excuses for not giving complimentary copies. These are times when printers of calenders think four times before parting with one.

Apart from giving me financial assistance, he gave publicity to the book in his *Service Letter*. It really helped my publishers to sell more number of copies.

Whenever I visit him he comments on my works and teaches me what I should avoid in future.

Once I wrote in my autobiographical serial—*For Your Ears Only*–that appeared in *Mother India* about my writing habits. Panditji who enjoyed reading it, pointed out where I went wrong. For the benefit of all other writers, he recorded his piece of advice in his *Service Letter* no: 181 dated 1–1–1988. It reads:

"The other day someone wrote that he did not believe in writing regularly. He could take up the pen only when he had the inspiration. He was pretty strong against the habit of writing everyday whether one was

moved to do it or not. May be that is his temperament. But there is another side to it.

"One is advised to keep on writing regularly. The writing is not done specifically to be put in print but to keep the brain cells that they are concerned with the activity in good fettle. In the ancient system of learning they speak of *avritti*, repetition. It creates grooves in the being—not just in the mind—and the consciousness flows in them whether one is attentive to it or not. Similarly if the habit of writing is made a regular feature, the mind turns to it without effort. With the result that when the inspiration or provocation comes, there is a ready instrument. A rusted apparatus is very discomfiting. So too with singing . Those who want to be good singers, keep a fixed time for the exercise; and they practise whether they are in mood or not, whether the voice is in good condition or not. The vocal chords have got to be kept in working condition always. The same is the case with the cells that attend to writing.

"One of our gifted poets was once overcome with disgust for writing. He felt that it would be more profitable to devote that time to pursuits like meditation, prayer and the like. When the matter was referred to Sri Aurobindo, he advised against yielding to the 'disgust'. This kind of aversion comes to many at some stage or other. It was pointed out that it is mostly due to *tamas*. It must be rejected.

"It could be that at times this is due to fatigue which itself is a result of over-exertion. The fatigue may be in

the brain or in the nerves. In such cases the obvious course is to go slow, take a break for a while.

"It is like keeping a machine in order. It needs to be run to prevent it from rusting. It is like physical exercise to keep up the health. There may be unavoidable breaks but by and large, regular activation of the limbs is a must for healthy living. The disinclination that creeps on now and then is usually a tamasic pull back.

"Note that all writing need not be of the first order. A good deal of pruning and revising is necessary. But if one goes on writing, after a time things fall in the right pattern. Then it becomes a question of not interfering with the flow. In the zeal for editing the red pencil often scores off the right expressions that have formed at the first touch. Discrimination grows with practice and detachment.

Panditji's words have already begun to work their miracle on me.

WORKS OF M.P. PANDIT
(A Complete List)

WORKS OF M.P. PANDIT

There is no published Bibliography of Mr. M.P. PANDIT's works. An incomplete and a somewhat inaccurate one appears in *M.P. Pandit: 50th Birthday Commemoration Volume* (1968). Under these circumstances it has seemed worth giving here as full and accurate a list as possible.

Unless otherwise mentioned, all titles given below are from DIPTI Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-605 002, India.

The year of publication is included under the main entry for each book. Entries in brackets are of later editions.

1950 Grace of the Great and Other Essays (1963; 1989)
1952 Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishad (1966; 1974)
1957 Sri Aurobindo: Studies in the Light of His Thought
1958 Aditi and Other Deities in the Veda (1970)
1959 Japa (1961; 1971; 1977; 1986; 1991)
1959 Kundalini Yoga (1962; 1968; 1979; 1993)
1959 The Teachings of Sri Aurobindo (1964; 1978; 1990)
1960 Dhyana (1967; 1972; 1976; 1986; 1990)
1960 Highways of God
1961 Burning Brazin (1974)

1961 Where the Wings of Glory Brood (1976)
1962 Sadhana in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga (1964)
1962 Voice of the Self
1963 Lamps of Light (1975)
1963 The Mother on India
1964 Current Problems
1965 Gems from Sri Aurobindo—First Series (1968)
1965 Kularnava Tantra (1973)
1965 The Mother of Love—Vol.I (1972; 1989)
1965 The Mother of Love—Vol.II (1972; 1990)
1966 Dictionary of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga (1973; 1992)
1966 Gems from Sri Aurobindo—Second Series
1966 Gems from Sri Aurobindo—Third Series
1966 Glossary of Sanskrit Terms in Sri Aurobindo's Works (1973)
1966 Light from Sri Aurobindo (1970; 1989; 1990)
1966 The Mother of Love—Vol.III (1972; 1990)
1966 Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Sri Aurobindo (1990)
1966 Shining Harvest
1966 Studies in the Tantra and the Veda (1967)
1967 Sri Aurobindo on the Tantra (1970; 1972)
1967 God
1967 Guide to Upanishads
1967 Key to Vedic Symbolism (1973)
1967 Light from the Gita
1967 The Mother of Love—Vol.IV
1969 The Call and the Grace (1975)
1969 Culture in Yoga

1969 Demands of Sadhana
1969 Essence of the Upanishads (1976)
1969 Gems from Sri Aurobindo—Fourth Series (1976)
1969 Gems from the Tantras—First Series
1969 Gleanings from the Upanishads (1976)
1969 Readings in Savitri—Vol.I (1988)
1970 Gems from the Tantras—Second Series (1976)
1970 Readings in Savitri—Vol.II (1989)
1970 Readings in Savitri—Vol.III
1971 Epigrams from Savitri
1971 Readings in Savitri—Vol.IV
1971 Readings in Savitri—Vol.V
1972 Sri Aurobindo: A Survey (1974)
1972 Bases of Tantra Sadhana (1977; 1991)
1973 Adoration of the Divine Mother
1973 Breath of Grace
1973 Readings in Savitri—Vol.VI
1973 Readings in Savitri—Vol.VII
1973 What Life Has Taught Me
1974 An Homage and a Pledge
1974 Meditations
1974 Project Universal Man
1974 Readings in Savitri—Vol.VIII
1975 All Life is Yoga
1975 Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: An Introduction
1975 Champaklal Speaks (1976)
1975 Dialogues and Perspectives
1975 Memorable Moments with the Mother
1975 Readings in Savitri—Vol.IX

1975 Sidelights on the Mother (1976; 1988; 1990)
1975 Something Else, Something More
1975 Under the Mother's Banner
1976 Champaklal's Treasures
1976 Dynamics of Yoga—Part I
1976 Singapore Chapter
1976 Yoga in Savitri
1976 The Yoga of Works
1977 Dynamics of Yoga—Part II
1977 Lights on the Tantra
1977 Readings in Savitri—Vol.X (with Index)
1977 Thoughts of a Shakta
1977 Yoga for Modern Man
1978 Dynamics of Yoga—Part III
1979 Occult Lines Behind Life (USA: Auromere)
1979 Sat-Sang—Vol.I
1980 How do I Begin? (1984; 1985; 1986; 1988; 1992)
1981 Talks on the Life Divine
1981 Yoga of Love (USA: Lotus Light Publications; 1982)
1982 Deathless Rose (1990)
1982 Heart of Sadhana (1992)
1982 How do I Proceed (1987, 1990)
1982 Introducing Savitri (1992)
1982 Sat-Sang—Vol.II
1983 Sri Aurobindo: A Biography (Delhi: Publications Division)
1983 Bases of Sadhana
1983 Book of Beginnings
1983 Call to America

1983 Commentaries on the Mother's Ministry—Vol.I
1983 Commentaries on the Mother's Ministry—Vol.II
1983 Integral Perfection: Talks in Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka: V. Murugesu)
1983 Spritual Life: Philosophy and Practice
1983 Yoga of Self-Perfection
1984 Mother and I
1984 A Savitri Dictionary
1985 Commentaries on the Mother's Ministry—Vol.III
1985 Legends in the Life Divine
1985 Life Beautiful (1987; 1989; 1992)
1985 More on Tantras (Delhi: Sterling Publishers)
1986 Book of the Divine Mother
1986 Sat-Sang—Vol.III
1986 Sat-Sang—Vol.IV
1986 Spiritual Communion
1986 Versatile Genius: Sri T.V. Kapali Sastriar
1986 The Yoga of Knowledge (USA: Lotus Light Publications)
1987 Sri Aurobindo and His Yoga (USA: Lotus Light Publications)
1987 Concept of Man in Sri Aurobindo
1987 Master and Disciple: S. Duraisamy Aiyar
1987 Pitfalls in Sadhana
1987 Sat-Sang—Vol.V
1987 Savitri: Talks in Germany
1987 Sidelights on Sri Aurobindo

1987 Traditions in Mysticism (Delhi: Sterling Publishers)
1987 Traditions in Occultism (Delhi: Sterling Publishers)
1988 Commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's Thought—Vol.I
1988 Commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's Thought—Vol.II
1988 Commentaries on the Mother's Ministry—Vol.IV
1988 Guide to the Life Divine
1988 Introducing the Life Divine
1988 Mighty Impersonality (1992)
1988 Talks on Life Divine—Vol.II
1988 Tell us of the Mother
1988 Traditions in Sadhana (Delhi: Sterling Publishers)
1988 Upanishads: Gateways of Knowledge (USA: Lotus Light Publications)
1988 Vedic Symbolism
1988 Wisdom of the Upanishads
1989 Art of Living (1990)
1989 Commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's Thought—Vol.III
1989 Education: Some Thoughts
1989 The Indian Spirit
1989 Meditations on the Divine Mother
1989 Sat-Sang—Vol.VI
1989 Vedic Deities (USA: Lotus Light Publications)
1989 Yoga of Transformation

1990 The Mother and Her Mission
1990 Thoughts on the Gita
1990 Vedic Wisdom
1990 Wisdom of the Veda (USA: Lotus Light Publications)
1991 Sat-Sang—Vol.VII
1991 Towards Universal Man
1992 Commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's Thought—Vol.IV
1992 An Early Chapter in the Mother's Life
1992 Wisdom of the Gita—Vol.I
1992 Wisdom of the Gita—Vol.II